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A DISSERTATION

On Reading the

CLASSICS,

And Forming a

JUST STYLE.

Written in the Year 1709,

And addreſſed to the

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

JOHN Lord *ROOS*,

The Preſent

Marquis of *GRANBY*.

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FRANCE

THE PREFACE.

THE following Sheets were the Product of some leisure Hours in the Country about three or four Years ago. They were written in the Year 1709, and not transcribed till the latter End of the next Summer, as the Reader will find by several Passages up and down, which will clear the Time, and save the Critics the Trouble of making any Mistakes in their Conjectures. For

Want of such Informations, or from the Loss of them, Learned Men have been at a World of Pains in settling the Date of many excellent Pieces, and have differed vastly from one another not only in a Day, or a Month, but even in a Year, nay sometimes in two or three. But I have always observed, that they disagree most, where they differ least; the nearer they come to one another, the closer is the Engagement; and the critical War is always hottest, when there is nothing between them.

I hope the Readers will be so candid, as not to expect what they do not find, for I am very sensible from the better Judgment

of Mankind, that they will be under a ſtrange Temptation to blame ſuch a Work as this, for laying down Rules without giving Examples; and I muſt own, it does not ſeem eaſy for me to excuſe ſo great an Omiſſion, when I might at once with the Trouble only of Tranſcribing, have enlarged the Book, adorned the Work, and diverted the courteous Reader.

But, perhaps, I had a Mind to be the firſt Modern that ever compoſed a Piece of this Nature without the Pomp of Quotations; and ſince I did not ſee the Neceſſity of it, I was willing to avoid all Oſtentation of Learning. Tully is very ſparing in Quotations. Moſt that he uſeth are to

ſhow the Force and Varyings of Action and Elocution, rather than the Rules of Writing, except when he quotes himſelf, which is next to not quoting at all, and the worſt Way of producing Examples in the World. Ariſtotle's Way is dry and formal: and Longinus who hath recorded ſome of the moſt beautiful Paſſages of the Greek Authors in his Treatiſe of Sublime, could not have been underſtood without them. I have dwell'd only in general Rules, without deſcending into the Provinces of the Grammarian and Rhetorician, and perhaps if any Body is pleaſed to try, he will hardly find it practicable to illuſtrate theſe Rules by Examples.

The

The Rules I have given, are the Result of a thousand others, the Abstract and Essence of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic; and the Examples of a perfect Style are to be taken from the best Authors in general, not from any separate Quotations. Tully and Quintilian do frequently commend the illustrious Writers they mention for their several Excellencies, and propose them as Standards in general for the several Ways of Writing they were distinguished in; but they never descend to Particulars, nor support their Opinions by formal Citations. For that they refer themselves to every Man's Taste and Judgment.

If we consider others, who have delivered any Rules of Writing, we shall find, the Examples they produce, are in minuter Matters to explain the Terms and Signification of the lower Rules, which relate to Grammar and Rhetoric, to the Art and Mechanism of Writing. But where they treat in generals, as I have done, they never illustrate their Rules by Examples. Quintilian's *Institution is full of Quotations, for the first nine Books in which he treats his Subject as a Rhetorician, but in the three last, especially the twelfth, where he rises from Particulars to more general Considerations, we hardly have one Citation; and the same may be observed*

ſerved of Tully *in his general Rules of Oratory. No body produces Examples of conſiſtent Writers by particular Quotations, and the ſeveral Rules I have given for the Idiom, Purity, Plainneſs, and Decorations of Speech, &c. cannot be farther illuſtrated by any Paſſages from Authors; for we have natural Notions of theſe Things, and can only ſet them off by ſhowing the ſeveral Ways of offending againſt them.*

Rules ſpeak themſelves; they draw the Picture of Nature, and give us ſure Criterions *of an Original in every Performance. I am very certain, the World had ſeen the faireſt Draughts before any ſettled Rules were given;*

and perhaps, the Works of the Learned have been more formal, but not more correct, since Men wrote according to Art. For those who first prescribed the Rules of Writing, did not take Nature stripped and naked for their Copy; but they looked upon her, as she was dressed and adorned by her Adorers. They took off indeed all false Colours, but allowed her a little Paint, and were content she should be set out like any Lady, provided her Dressers did not spoil her native Beauty. They formed their Rules upon the Model of the best Writers; they were so artful as to conceal their Art, and while they seemed to prescribe to others, they were only Copiers them-

themselves. But after they had fixed the Standard, they were sure every Writer would be brought to their Bar; and as the first admirable Copies of Nature gave them a Foundation for their Rules, they knew every good Genius would write and judge by Nature, whether any Rules had been set or no. And perhaps, (for I love to doubt in Matters of so hazardous Conjecture) if the Rules had not been given, we had been troubled with many fewer Writers; for then those who had not Nature for their Rule, could have had no Rule at all. But now how many Scriblers are there who observe the Rules, and neglect the Meaning, and what Number of

Pedants do we meet with, that keep to the Letter, and lose the Spirit?

I won't pretend to answer my Want of Method, perhaps I have observed it, tho' I seem to neglect it. Nor shall I need any Apology for the Style and Manner I have used, which the severer Critics will censure as too light and juvenile for one of my Profession. But I was not writing to myself, nor to the grave and learned, but to a young Nobleman of sprightly Parts, and a lively Imagination. My Business was to engage his Attention, and give the Piece such Colours, as would strike his Fancy. And I am very glad, that while I wrote to a Youth, I could write some-

thing

thing like a Youth, only tempering the Briskneſs of Thought with the Sedateneſs of Judgment.

What I wiſhed might be performed by the fineſt Wits upon the ancient Authors, I have with inexpreſſible Pleaſure ſeen accompliſhed by the admirable Critic upon Milton. And if Mr. Steele, and his Friends, would do the ſame Juſtice to Horace, Homer, and Virgil, or any celebrated Names in Antiquity, we might hope to read them in a brighter Light, and peruſe Ten thouſand Glories, which lie covered under the Modern Way of Illuſtration.

Tully who hath given us thoſe excellent Books of Orators, and Oratory, was himſelf the greater Orator.

Orator. If Horace had not been an excellent Poet, he had never been an admirable Critic. The best Performers are the best Judges in every Art, and the ingenious Author of the Essay upon Criticism, demonstrates the Justness of his Remarks, by the Goodness of his Writing. The true Spirit of Criticism seems to revive. My Lord Roscommon, and the present, with the late Duke of Bucks, opened the Scene in King Charles the Second's Time, but it soon closed again. And nothing was done but in a dry, formal Way, except by Dryden, who at once gave the best Rules, and broke them in spight of his own Knowledge, and the Rehearsal. His

Prefaces

Prefaces are many of them admirable upon Dramatic Writing; he had some peculiar Notions, which he maintains with great Address; but his Judgment in disputed Points is of less Weight and Value, because the Inconstancy of his Temper did run into his Thoughts, and mixed with the Conduct of his Writings, as well as his Life.

The present Age seemeth to be born for carrying Criticism to its highest Pitch and Perfection. We have seen many admirable Pieces in the single Papers, which have been published of late Years, preferable to Volumes of your stanch, formal Critics. Many ingenious Hands have concurred to rescue it from Pedantry, Dul-

neſs, and Ill-Nature. It is no longer a dry, ſour, verbal Study, but claimeth a Place among the politeſt Parts of Learning; A Critic ſhould lift up his Head with an eaſy, chearful Air, and not be diſtinguiſhed, as the Tribe hath generally been, by the Wrinkles of his Brows, but as Men of Candor and Ingenuity ought to be, by the Good Nature, Freedom, and Openneſs of his Countenance. Critics are apt to talk in a ſupercilious, magiſterial Way, to obtrude their Sentiments on the World, and maintain every ſingular Opinion with Stiffneſs and Ill Manners. But if they would ſoften the Rigor of their Pen, and offer their Notions in a modeſt affa-

ble

le Addreſs, their Civility and Com-
laiſance would take off thoſe Pre-
udices, with which Pride and
ositiveneſs are generally enter-
ained. The late Edition of Ho-
ace is the fineſt and greateſt
iece of Criticiſm, that was ever
ritten on any Claſſic; and if
e moſt Learned Doctor had been
more popular Writer, the World
believe would have admired ſe-
veral Paſſages they endeavour to
explode: And more Texts had
been acknowledged admirably re-
ſtored, if ſome had not been ma-
giſterially obtruded. What a po-
lite Critic may do if he pleaſes,
and in how different an Aſpect
Criticiſm appears, when formed
by Men of Parts and Fire, we
may

may see in Mr. Trapp's Prælectiones Poeticæ. A Work that cannot be enough commended, whether we consider the Curiousness of his Observations, the Justness of his Remarks, the Truth and Importance of his Rules, the Aptness and Beauty of his Examples, the Force and Elegance of his Style, and the Penetration of his Wit and Judgment: A Piece in such Perfection of Beauty, that he gives the Rules with the same Spirit we find in the Examples, and maketh those Dissertations, which in heavy, formal Hands, would have looked crabbed, dull, and dry, shine in all the Graces, that Life and Ease, and Vigor can adorn them with; we

see

ee how entertaining the ſevereſt
riticiſms are in a Poet's Hand,
nd what Life and Spirit he can
ive to the dryeſt Part of his
ubject, while he preſcribes the
ules, and fixes the Laws of
oetic Diction, weigheth the Im-
ortance of Words, and conſiders
e ſeveral Ways of Expreſſion
eculiar to the Poets. And if
Men of ſuch Learning, and ſuch
arts, would undertake this Pro-
ince, I cannot help repeating it,
e ſhould ſee more and more
nto the Propriety, Strength,
and Compaſs, and all the hidden
Beauties of the Greek and Latin
Tongue.

What Advantages our Lan-
guage may receive, when thoſe
will

will take upon them to reform it, who are the best Writers in it, we may partly conceive from the new Proposal for ascertaining *the* British *Tongue, and fixing the* Standard *of it. And whenever a Work of that Public Spirit shall be undertaken, and supported by the greatest and ablest Hands in the Kingdom, I will promise myself to see our Language rival the Strength and Eloquence of the* Roman *Diction.*

If I had seen my Lord Lansdowne's *Poems in one View, I might have formed a juster Idea of the Greatness of his Genius, and the Delicacy of his Wit. For when I wrote these Sheets, they lay dispersed up and down in the Miscel-*

Miſcellanies, but ſome kind Hand hath aſſembled the ſcattered Stars, and added another Lyre to the Conſtellations.

Perhaps, the Characters I have drawn of our moſt celebrated Poets, Hiſtorians, and Divines, will not be agreed in by all; and therefore, ſo various is the Judgment of Mankind, I ſuffer'd that Piece to go with ſome Reluctance. All I can ſay for myſelf, is, that I have conſidered very carefully the Diſtinction of their Characters, and if I am not miſtaken in that, I am ſure I have ſaid no more of them, than they deſerve.

If I have advanced any ſingular Opinions, I ſhall be ready either to give them up, or give my Reaſons

for

for them; for, however I may differ in my Notions from the Herd of Critics and Commentators, I shall always be ambitious to join with the Politer, and more Candid Part of Mankind.

THE

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A

DISSERTATION, &c.

MY LORD,

I CAN hardly prevail with myself to give Your Lordship this Trouble, without making an Apology for it in the Entrance, and begging Your Lordship's Pardon for intruding without Leave, and offering You a Present before I am sure of Your Acceptance. I might be very large upon the

Importance and Advantages of Education, and ſay a great many Things which have been ſaid before, but that Point is ſo well conſidered by Your Lordſhip's moſt Noble Parents, that I need not ſay any Thing upon it; and Your Lordſhip's Application to the excellent Methods taken for making a great, and a good Man, will anſwer, I am perſuaded, all the fair Expectations every body conceiveth of You, that knoweth You.

And therefore, as You want no Inſtructions ſuitable to Your Birth and Quality, I have rather choſen to preſent Your Lordſhip with ſome peculiar Thoughts, than to run a needleſs Treatiſe upon

upon the Subject at length; and tho' what I ſay, is no doubt inculcated to Your Lordſhip by better Hands, yet Variety may engage Your Attention, and the ſame Precepts differently applyed will make the deeper Impreſſion, where Your Mind hath received the Characters before, and is readier to admit a ſecond Stamp, when it is ſo well prepared by the firſt.

Your Lordſhip will at leaſt have the Advantage of ſeeing Things together; and Leiſure to weigh and conſider the Reaſonableneſs of what is recommended to You: And if I offer any Thing which is not commonly obſerved, I hope it will

not be interpreted any Singularity, but ſuch, as may render Your Lordſhip more Eminent, and Diſtinguiſhed in the World.

The great Obligations I have to thoſe of Your Illuſtrious Family incline me to make ſome Acknowledgment, and ſince I am not capable of doing it to them, I have choſen this Way to give Your Lordſhip a Token of the great Honour I have for the *Houſe* of RUTLAND; and if I am of any Service to Your Lordſhip, I ſhall gratify a particular Inclination of my own to ſerve You.

Your Lordſhip's Years begin to make You capable of Reflection,

tion, and Your good Parts advancing far before Your Years, diſcover a ſolid Judgment joined with a quick Apprehenſion, which, if duly improved, will teach You to think right, and bring You to ſo juſt a Concluſion in all Emergencies, that to apprehend and determine will be but one Trouble; ſo vaſt an Advantage is a natural Penetration in an Underſtanding like Yours, when it comes to be exerciſed in Knowledge, and acquainted with the World.

I have obſerved, beſides the Readineſs of Parts, a Goodneſs of Nature, an excellent Diſpoſition of Mind derived to Your

Lordſhip from the Parents of two Generations to whom I have the Honour to be known; and thoſe excellent Seeds implanted in Your Birth, will, if cultivated, be moſt flouriſhing in Production; and as the Soil is good, and no Coſt nor Care wanting to improve it, we muſt entertain Hopes of the richeſt Harveſt: The Ear moſt Admirable and Full, when the Blade is ſo Fair and Promiſing.

Your Birth is attended with peculiar Advantages of Title and Eſtate, of Worth and Goodneſs in Your Anceſtors and Parents: The Honour and Dignity of Your Family; the great Examples of Virtue in Your Proge-

rogenitors for a long Deſcent; nd the living, and more pre- ailing Example of Your moſt lluſtrious Grand-Father and ather will fire a Soul like ours to a generous Emula- ion, and, I hope, Your Lord- hip will *follow them with equal Steps, if You do not go beyond hem.*

So ſelect a Conjunction of he happieſt Circumſtances muſt ave a bleſſed Influence on the whole Courſe of Your Life; and if Families are the more Noble for being more Ancient, Your Lordſhip will ſhine in true Nobility, and reflect a Luſtre on all the long *Gallery* of Your Predeceſſors.

But, my Lord, the faireſt Diamonds are rough till they are poliſhed, and the pureſt Gold muſt be run and waſhed, and ſifted in the Oar. We are untaught by Nature, and the fineſt Qualities will grow wild and degenerate, if the Mind is not formed by Diſcipline, and cultivated with an early Care. In ſome Perſons, who have run up to Men without a liberal Education, we may obſerve many great Qualities darken'd and eclips'd; their Minds are cruſted over like Diamonds in the Rock, they flaſh out ſometimes into an irregular Greatneſs of Thought, and betray in their Actions an unguided

uided Force, and unmanaged
irtue; ſomething very Great
nd very Noble may be diſcern-
d, but it looketh cumberſome
nd awkard, and is alone of all
hings the worſe for being na-
ural. Nature is undoubtedly the
eſt Miſtriſs, and the apteſt Scho-
r, but Nature herſelf muſt be
ivilized, or ſhe will look ſa-
age, as ſhe appears in the *In-
ian* Princes, who are veſted
ith a native Majeſty, a ſur-
rizing Greatneſs and Genero-
ity of Soul, and diſcover what
we always regret, Fine Parts,
nd excellent natural Endow-
ments without Improvement.
n thoſe Countries, which we
all *Barbarous*, where Art and

Politeneſs are not underſtood. Nature hath the greater Advantage in this, that Simplicity of Manners often ſecureth the Innocence of the Mind; and as Virtue is not, ſo neither is Vice civilized and refined; But in theſe *Polite* Parts of the World, where Virtue excelleth by Rules and Diſcipline, Vice alſo is more inſtructed, and with us good Qualities will not ſpring up alone: Many hurtful Weeds will riſe with them, and choak them in their Growth, unleſs removed by ſome skilful Hand; nor will the Mind be brought to a juſt Perfection, without cheriſhing every hopeful Seed,

and

nd repreſſing every ſuperflu-
us Humour: The Mind is
ike the Body in this Regard,
which cannot fall into a de-
ent and eaſy Carriage, unleſs
t be faſhioned in Time: An
ntaught Behaviour is like the
eople that uſe it, truly ru-
ic, forced, and uncouth, and
rt muſt be applied to make
t Natural.

My Lord, the Neceſſity of
ducation is plain, but the Me-
hods of it are in many Points
ngrateful to Perſons of Your
Lordſhip's Years. Sprightly
Youth, and cloſe Application
will hardly ſtand together:
Long Attention to the ſame
Thing is tedious to tender

Minds; and 'tis difficult to fix the *Mercury*, and ſettle a brisk, lively Temper in a laborious, plodding Track of Learning. This Your Lordſhip's Parts are too delicate to admit of, and too ready to need: Your Lordſhip will always uſe Application enough to apprehend Things fully, and a ſhorter Attention, if it be cloſe, will maſter any Difficulty, that falls in Your way: I believe, Your Lordſhip is of that generous Temper ſo natural to Perſons of Your great Parts, to ſuffer no Difficulty to be too hard for You, and to maſter every Oppoſition, that would obſtruct Your Paſſage.

For,

For, my Lord, 'tis in Knowledge as in War; Open Places are eaſily taken in, and Towns not ſtrongly fortified make but a weak Reſiſtance; but where Art and Nature conſpire to render any Fortreſs impregnable; it muſt be won by the moſt powerful Aſſaults, and nobleſt Reſolution. *Bruſſels* and *Louvain* are eaſy Conqueſts, they do not ſo much reſiſt, as admit the Victor; but if the Duke of *Marlborough*, or Prince *Eugene* had expected other Towns would have made them the ſame Complements, *Liſle* had ſtill remained to the *French*, and *Mons*, and *Tournay* might ſtill have been thought impregnable.

pregnable. 'Tis familiar to our Troops to beat an Army in plain Fight, and open Field; but when the Enemy lieth entrenched behind Lines, as strong as Walls, the late bloody, and glorious Battle at the Woods of *Sart* and *Sanssart* will shew, that the last Degrees of Bravery and Resolution, the most absolute Points of Courage and Conduct are required to surmount such insuperable Difficulties, and return with Victory.

To leave this Digression, my Lord, if I may call it so, Knowledge will not be won without Pains and Application: Some Parts of it are easier,

ſier, ſome more difficult of Acceſs: We muſt proceed at once by Sap and Battery, and when the Breach is practicable, Your Lordſhip hath Nothing to do, but to preſs boldly on, and enter: It is troubleſome and deep Digging for pure Waters, but when once You come to the Spring, they riſe and meet You: The Entrance into Knowledge is oftentimes very Narrow, Dark, and Tireſome, but the Rooms are Spacious, and glorioufly furniſhed: The Country is admirable, and every Proſpect entertaining. Your Lordſhip need not wonder, that fine Countries have ſtrait Avenues, when the

Regions

Regions of Happineſs, like thoſe of Knowledge, are impervious, and ſhut to lazy Travellers, and the Way to Heaven it ſelf is Narrow.

Common Things are eaſily attained, and no body valueth what lieth in every body's Way: What is Excellent is placed out of ordinary Reach, and Your Lordſhip will eaſily be perſuaded to put forth Your Hand to the utmoſt Stretch, and reach whatever You aſpire at.

Many are the Subjects, my Lord, which will invite and deſerve the ſteadieſt Application from thoſe who would excell, and be diſtinguiſhed in them.

them. Humane Learning in general: Natural Philoſophy: Mathematicks, and the whole Circle of Science: But, my Lord, there is no Neceſſity of leading Your Lordſhip thro' theſe ſeveral Fields of Knowledge: It will be moſt Commendable for Your Lordſhip to gather ſome of the faireſt Fruit from them all, and to lay up a Store of good Senſe, and ſound Reaſon, of great Probity, and ſolid Virtue: This is the true Uſe of Knowledge, to make it ſubſervient to the great Duties of our moſt Holy Religion, that as You are daily grounded in the true and ſaving Knowledge of a Chriſtian,

Christian, You may use the Helps of humane Learning, and direct them to their proper End. Your Lordship will meet with great and wonderful Examples of an irregular and mistaken Virtue in the *Greeks* and *Romans*; with many Instances of Greatness of Mind, of unshaken Fidelity, Contempt of humane Grandeur, a most passionate Love of their Country, Prodigality of Life, Disdain of Servitude, inviolable Truth, and the most publick disinterested Souls, that ever threw off all Regards in Comparison with their Country's Good; Your Lordship will discern the Flaws and Blemishes

of

f their faireſt Actions, ſee the
rong Apprehenſions they had
f Virtue, and be able to point
hem right, and keep them with-
n their proper Bounds. Under
his Correction Your Lordſhip
ay extract a generous and no-
le Spirit from the Writings and
Hiſtories of the Ancients. And
would in a particular Manner
ecommend the *Claſſic Authors* to
Your Favour, and they will re-
commend themſelves to Your
Approbation.

If Your Lordſhip would re-
ſolve to maſter the *Greek* as well
as the *Latin* Tongue, You will
find that the one is the Source
and Original of all that is moſt
Excellent in the other; I do

not

not mean ſo much for Expreſſion, as Thought, though ſome of the moſt beautiful Strokes of the *Latin* Tongue are drawn from the Lines of the *Grecian* Orators and Poets; but for Thought, and Fancy, for the very Foundation, and Embelliſhment of their Works, You will ſee, the *Latins* have ranſacked the *Grecian* Store, and as *Horace* adviſes all, who would ſucceed in Writing well, had their Authors Night and Morning in their Hands.

And they have been ſuch happy Imitators, that the Copies have proved more exact than the Originals; and *Rome* hath triumphed over *Athens*, as well

ell in Wit, as Arms; for
o' *Greece* may have the Ho-
our of Invention, yet 'tis ea-
er to ſtrike out a new Courſe
f Thought, than to equal old
Originals, and therefore it is
nore Honour to ſurpaſs, than
o invent anew. *Verrio* is a
reat Man from his own De-
igns, but if he had attempted
pon the *Cartons*, and out-done
Raphael Urbin in Life and Co-
lours, he had been acknow-
ledged greater than that cele-
brated Maſter, but now we
muſt think him leſs.

If I may detain Your Lord-
ſhip with a ſhort Compariſon
of the *Greek* and *Roman* Au-
thors, I muſt needs own, the
laſt

last have the Preference in my Thoughts, and I am not Singular in my Opinion. It must be confessed, the *Romans* have left no Tragedies behind them, that may compare with the Majesty of the *Grecian* Stage; the best Comedies of *Rome* were written on the *Grecian* Plan, but *Menander* is too far lost to be compared with *Terence*; only if we may judge by the Method *Terence* used in forming two *Greek* Plays into one we shall naturally conclude, since his are perfect upon that Model, that they are more perfect than *Menander*'s were. I shall make no great Difficulty in preferring *Plautus* to *Aristophanes* for Wit and

nd Humour, Variety of Cha-
acters, Plot and Contrivance
n his Plays.

Virgil has been ſo often com-
pared with *Homer*, and the
Merits of thoſe Poets ſo often
anvaſſed, that I ſhall only
ſay, that if the *Roman* ſhines
not in the *Grecian*'s Flame and
Fire, 'tis the Coolneſs of his
Judgment rather than the Want
of Heat. Your Lordſhip will
generally find the Force of a
Poet's Genius, and the Strength
of his Fancy diſplay themſelves
in the Deſcriptions they give of
Battles, Storms, Prodigies, *&c.*
and *Homer*'s Fire breaks out on
theſe Occaſions in more Dread
and Terror: But *Virgil* mixes

Com-

Compaſſion with his Terror, and by throwing Water on the Flame maketh it burn the brighter; ſo in the Storms, ſo in his Battles on the Fall of *Pallas* and *Camilla:* and that Scene of Horror, which his Hero opens in the ſecond Book: the Burning of *Troy:* the Ghoſt of *Hector:* the Murder of the King: the Maſſacre of the People: the ſudden Surprize and the Dead of Night are ſo reliev'd by the Piety and Pity that is every where intermix'd, that we forget our Fears, and join in the Lamentation. All the World acknowledgeth the *Æneid* to be moſt Perfect in its Kind; and conſidering the Diſadvantage of

the

he Language, and the *Severity* f the *Roman Muſe*, the Poem s ſtill more Wonderful, ſince vithout the Liberty of the *Grecian* Poets, the Diction is o Great and Noble, ſo Clear, o Forcible and Expreſſive, ſo Chaſte and Pure, that even all he Strength and Compaſs of he *Greek* Tongue joined to *Homer*'s Fire cannot give us tronger and clearer Ideas, than he great *Virgil* hath ſet before our Eyes; ſome few Inſtances xcepted, in which *Homer* thro' he Force of Genius hath ex-celled.

I have argued hitherto, my Lord, for *Virgil*, and it will be no Wonder, that his Poem

ſhould be more correct in the Rules of Writing, if that ſtrange Opinion prevaileth, that *Homer* writ without any View or Deſign at all, that his Poems are looſe, independent Pieces tacked together, and were originally only for many *Ballads* or *Songs* upon the *Gods* and *Heroes*, and the *Siege* of *Troy*. If this be true, they are the completeſt String of Ballads I ever met with, and whoever collected them, and put them in the Method we now read them in; whether it were *Piſiſtratus*, or any other, hath placed them in ſuch Order, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſeis* ſeem to have been compoſed

with

with one View and Deſign, one Scheme and Intention, which are carried on from the Beginning to the End all along Uniform and Conſiſtent with themſelves. Some, my Lord, have argued the World was made by a wiſe Being, and not jumbled together by Chance from the very Abſurdity of ſuch a Suppoſition; and they have illuſtrated their Argument from the Impoſſibility, that ſuch a Poem, as *Homer*'s, and *Virgil*'s ſhould riſe in ſuch beautiful Order out of Millions of Letters eternally ſhaken together; but this Argument is half ſpoiled, if we allow, that the Poems of *Homer*,

in each of which appeareth one continued formed Design from one End to the other, were written in loose Scraps on no settled premeditated Scheme. *Horace*, we are sure, was of another Opinion, and so was *Virgil* too, who built his *Æneid* upon the Model of the *Iliad*, and the *Odysseis*; after all, *Tully*, whose Relation of this Passage hath given some Colour to this Suggestion, sayeth no more, than that *Pisistratus*, whom he commendeth for his Learning, and condemneth for his Tyranny, observing the Books of *Homer* to lie confused and out of Order, placed them in the Method the great Author,

no

no doubt, had first formed them in: But all this *Tully* giveth us only as Report. And it would be very strange that *Aristotle* should form his Rules on *Homer*'s Poems, that *Horace* should follow his Example, and propose *Homer* for the Standard of *Epic* Writing with this bright Testimony, that he *never undertook any Thing inconsiderately, nor ever made any fooliſh Attempts*, if indeed this celebrated Poet did not intend to form his Poems in the Order and Design we see them in: If we look upon the Fabrick and Construction of those great Works, we shall find an admirable Proportion

in all the Parts, a perpetual Coincidence, and Dependence of one upon another; I will venture an Appeal to any learned Critic in this Cause; and if it be a sufficient Reason to alter the common Readings in a Letter, a Word, or a Phrase from the Consideration of the Context, or Propriety of the Language, and call it the Restoring of the Text, is it not a Demonstration that these Poems were made in the same Course of Lines, and upon the same Plan we read them in at present, from all the Arguments, that Connection, Dependence and Regularity can give us? If those Critics, who maintain this odd

Fancy

Fancy of *Homer*'s Writings, had found them looſe, and undigeſted, and reſtored them to the Order they ſtand in now, I believe they would have gloried in their Art, and maintained it with more unconteſted Reaſons, than they are able to bring for the Diſcovery of a Word, or a Syllable hitherto falſly printed in the Text of any Author. But, my Lord, if any learned Men of ſingular Fancies and Opinions will not allow theſe Buildings to have been originally deſigned after the preſent Model, let them at leaſt allow us one poetical Suppoſition on our Side, that *Homer*'s Harp was as Powerful to command

his ſcattered incoherent Pieces into the beautiful Structure of a Poem, as *Amphion*'s was to ſummon the Stones into a Wall, or *Orpheus*'s to lead the Trees a Dance. For certainly, however it happeneth, the Parts are ſo juſtly diſpoſed, that You cannot change any Book into the Place of another without ſpoiling the Proportion, and confounding the Order of the Whole.

The *Georgicks* are above all Controverſy with *Heſiod*; but the *Idylliums* of *Theocritus* have ſomething ſo inimitably Sweet in the Verſe and Thoughts, ſuch a native Simplicity, and are ſo genuine, ſo natural a Reſult of the

the rural Life, that I muſt in my poor Judgment, allow him the Honour of the *Paſtoral.*

In *Lyricks* the *Grecians* may ſeem to have excelled, as undoubtedly they are ſuperior in the Number of their Poets, and Variety of their Verſe. *Orpheus*, *Alcæus*, *Sappho*, *Simonides* and *Steſichorus* are almoſt entirely loſt: Here and there a Fragment of ſome of them is remaining, which, like ſome broken Parts of ancient Statues, preſerve an imperfect Monument of the Delicacy, Strength, and Skill of the great Maſter's Hand.

Pindar is ſublime, but obſcure, impetuous in his Courſe, and unfathomable in the Depth

and Loftineſs of his Thoughts: *Anacreon* floweth ſoft and eaſy, every where diffuſing the Joy and Indolence of his Mind thro' his Verſe, and tuning his Harp to the ſmooth, and pleaſant Temper of his Soul: *Horace* alone may be compared to both, in whom are reconciled the Loftineſs and Majeſty of *Pindar*, and the gay, careleſs, jovial Temper of *Anacreon*: And, I ſuppoſe, however *Pindar* may be admired for Greatneſs, and *Anacreon* for Delicateneſs of Thought; *Horace*, who rivals one in his Triumphs, and the other in his Mirth and Love, ſurpaſſeth them both in Juſtneſs, Elegance, and Happineſs of Expreſſion.

preſſion. *Anacreon* hath another Follower among the choiceſt Wits of *Rome*, and that is *Catullus*, whom I could recommend for the Softneſs and Delicacy of his Verſe, but muſt decline for the Looſeneſs of his Thoughts too immodeſt for chaſte Ears to bear. Otherwiſe in his more ſolemn Lines he riſeth to the Majeſty of the *Roman* Genius.

I will go no further in the Poets only for the Honour of our Country, let me obſerve to Your Lordſhip, that while *Rome* hath been contented to produce ſome ſingle Rivals to the *Grecian* Poetry, *England* hath brought forth the wonderful *Cowley*'s Wit, who was beloved by every Muſe he

courted, and hath rivalled the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets in every Kind, but Tragedy.

I will not trouble Your Lordſhip with the Hiſtorians any farther, than to inform You, that the Conteſt lyeth chiefly between *Thucydides* and *Saluſt*, *Herodotus* and *Livy*, though I think *Thucydides* and *Livy* may on many Accounts more juſtly be compared: The Critics have been very free in their Cenſures, but I ſhall be glad to ſuſpend any farther Judgment, till Your Lordſhip ſhall be able to read them, and give me Your Opinion.

Oratory and Philoſophy are the next diſputed Prizes; and whatever Praiſes may be juſtly

juſtly given to *Ariſtotle*, *Plato*, *Xenophon* and *Demoſthenes*, I will venture to ſay, that the divine *Tully* is all the *Grecian* Orators and Philoſophers in One.

And now, my Lord, having poſſibly given You ſome Prejudice in Favour of the *Romans*, I muſt beg Leave to aſſure You, that if You have not Leiſure to maſter Both, You will find Your Pains well rewarded in the *Latin* Tongue; when once You enter into the Elegancies, and Beauties of it. 'Tis the peculiar Felicity of that Language to ſpeak good Senſe in ſuitable Expreſſions: to give the fineſt Thoughts in the happieſt Words, and in an eaſy

Majeſty

Majeſty of Style, to write up to the Subject. "And in this, "my Lord, lieth the great Se- "cret of Writing well. It is that "elegant Simplicity, that or- "namental Plainneſs of Speech, "which every common Genius "thinketh ſo plain, that any "Body may reach it, and find- "eth ſo very Elegant, that all "his Sweat and Pains, and Stu- "dy fail him in the Attempt.

In Reading the excellent Authors of the *Roman* Tongue, whether You converſe with *Poets*, *Orators* or *Hiſtorians*, Your Lordſhip will meet with all that is admirable in Humane Compoſure: And tho' Life, and Spirit, Propriety, and

and Force of Style, be common to them all, You will ſee, that nevertheleſs every Writer ſhineth in his peculiar Excellencies, and that Wit, like Beauty, is diverſified into a Thouſand Graces of Feature and Complexion.

I need not trouble Your Lordſhip with a particular Character of theſe celebrated Writers. What I have ſaid already, and what I ſhall ſay further of them as I go along, render it leſs neceſſary at preſent; and I would not pre-engage Your Lordſhip's Opinion implicitly to my Side. It will be a pleaſant Exerciſe of Your Judgment to diſtinguiſh them

Your-

Yourſelf; and when Your Lordſhip and I ſhall be able to depart from the common received Opinions of the Critics and Commentators, I may take ſome other Occaſion of laying them before Your Lordſhip, and ſubmitting what I ſhall then ſay of them to Your Lordſhip's Approbation.

In the mean time, I ſhall only give Your Lordſhip two or three Cautions, and Directions for Your reading them, which to ſome People will look a little odd, but with me they are of great Moment, and very neceſſary to be obſerv'd.

The firſt is, that Your Lordſhip would never be perſuaded into

into what they call *Common-Places*, which is a Way of taking an Author to Pieces, and ranging him under proper Heads, that You may readily find what he hath ſaid upon any Point, by conſulting an *Alphabet*. This Practice is of no Uſe but in Circumſtantials of Time and Place, Cuſtom, and Antiquity, and in ſuch Inſtances where Facts are to be remembred, not where the Brain is to be exerciſed. In theſe Caſes it is of great Uſe: It helpeth the Memory, and ſerveth to keep thoſe Things in a Sort of Order and Succeſſion. But, my Lord, *Common Placing* the *Senſe* of an Author

thor is ſuch a ſtupid Undertaking, that, if I may be indulged in ſaying it, they *want Common Senſe* that practiſe it. What Heaps of this Rubbiſh have I ſeen! O the Pains and Labour to record what other People have ſaid, that is taken by thoſe, who have Nothing to ſay themſelves! Your Lordſhip may depend upon it, the Writings of theſe Men are never worth the Reading; the Fancy is cramp'd, the Invention ſpoiled, their Thoughts on every Thing are prevented, if they think at all; but 'tis the peculiar Happineſs of theſe *Collectors* of Senſe, that they can write without *Thinking*.

I do moſt readily agree, that all the bright ſparkling Thoughts of the *Antients*; their fineſt Expreſſions, and nobleſt Sentiments, are to be met with in theſe *Tranſcribers*: But how wretchedly are they brought in, how miſerably put together! Indeed, my Lord, I can compare ſuch Productions to nothing but rich Pieces of Patch-work, ſewed together with Pack-thread.

When I ſee a beautiful Building of exact Order and Proportion taken down, and the different Materials laid together by themſelves, it putteth me in mind of theſe *Common-Place Men.* The Materials are certainly

certainly very good, but they underſtand not the Rules of Architecture ſo well, as to form them into juſt and maſterly Proportions any more: And yet how beautiful would they ſtand in another Model upon another Plan!

For, my Lord, we muſt confeſs the Truth: We can ſay nothing New, at leaſt we can ſay nothing Better, than hath been ſaid before; but we may nevertheleſs make what we ſay our *Own*. And this is done, when we do not trouble ourſelves to remember in what Page, or what Book we have read ſuch a Paſſage; but it falleth in naturally with the Courſe

Courſe of our own Thoughts, and taketh its Place in our Writings with as much Eaſe, and looketh with as good a Grace, as it appeared in Two Thouſand Years ago.

This, my Lord, is the beſt Way of remembring the *Antient* Authors, when You *reliſh* their Way of Writing, enter into their *Thoughts*, and *imbibe* their *Senſe*. There is no need of tying ourſelves up to an Imitation of any of them; much leſs to copy, or tranſcribe them. For there is Room for vaſt Variety of Thought and Style, as Nature is various in her Works, and is Nature ſtill. Good Authors, like the celebrated

brated *Maſters* in the ſeveral *Schools* of *Painting*, are *Originals* in their *Way*, and *different* in their Manner. And when we can make the ſame Uſe of the *Romans* as they did of the *Grecians*, and habituate ourſelves to their Way of Thinking, and Writing, we may be equal in Rank, tho' different from them all, and be eſteemed *Originals* as well as they.

And this is what I would have Your Lordſhip do: Mix and incorporate with thoſe ancient Streams; and tho' Your own Wit will be improved, and heightened by ſuch a ſtrong Infuſion, yet the Spirit, the Thought, the Fancy, the Expreſſion

preſſion which ſhall flow from Your Pen, will be entirely Your Own.

The next Direction I would give Your Lordſhip is, that You would *decline* the *Critical* Part of Learning as much as poſſible, for that will lead You inſenſibly from good Senſe, and good Language, and 'tis below a Perſon of Your Lordſhip's Parts and Quality to take Notice of it: I am not ignorant of its admirable Uſe in the World of Learning, nor would I betray Your Lordſhip into any Contempt of an Art, where a Man muſt be a great Man indeed to excel, as ſome amongſt us moſt eminently do.

But,

But, my Lord, I would warn Your Lordship against the Infection of the less, and lower Critics, who are capable of nothing but collating Manuscripts, and are not able to ascertain the Text, or bring You nearer to the Original; this is the Case of Your common Editors, but 'tis one Comfort, that we need not be too solicitous about the Words of an Author, to have a right Taste of him: Your Lordship will always use the best and most correct Editions, and various Readings will be only troublesome, where the Sense and Language are complete without them.

My

My Lord, I am always an Advocate for young Gentlemen in the Buſineſs of their Studies: It is certainly a great Miſtake to make it difficult and laborious, to vex and torture the Minds of Youth with dry, inſipid, grave, and perplexing Trifles. Study will be recommended to young Heads with better Succeſs from the Eaſineſs, and Pleaſure of the Practice, than from the Uſefulneſs and Importance of the Subject, and all Ways ſhould be invented to make the learning Part delightful and engaging.

Learning is dreſſed to a great Diſadvantage, by Critics and Grammarians; like a beautiful

Lady ill-painted, she maketh a frightful Figure: And then she is cloiſtered up, my Lord, like a Fairy Princeſs in an enchanted Caſtle, encompaſſed with Moates and Walls, and guarded by *Paynim* Knights, monſtrous Giants, and burning Dragons. But my Lord, if a Man hath but Wit and Courage enough not to be daunted at theſe grim Appearances, the Charm is diſſolved, the Bugbears vaniſh, and the Way is open.

It hath been a long Complaint in this polite, and excellent Age of Learning, that we loſe our Time in Words, that the Memory of Youth is charged, and overloaded with-

out

out Improvement, and all they learn is meer Cant and Jargon for three or four Years together. Now, my Lord, the Complaint is in some Measure true, but not easily remedied, and perhaps, after all the Exclamation of so much Time lost in meer Words and Terms, the hopeful Youths whose Loss of Time is so much lamented, were capable of learning nothing but Words at those Years: I do not mind what some Quacks in the Art of Teaching say; they pretend to work Wonders, and to make young Gentlemen Masters of the Languages, before they can be Masters of Common Sense; but this to me, my

Lord, is a Demonſtration, that we are capable of little elſe than Words, till we come into our Teens, if Your Lordſhip will obſerve, that a Lad ſhall be able to repeat his Grammar over two or three Years before his Underſtanding opens enough to let him into the Reaſon, and clear Apprehenſion of the Rules, and when this is done ſooner or later, it ceaſeth to be Cant and Jargon; ſo that all this Clamour is wrong founded, and the Cauſe of Complaint lies rather againſt the Backwardneſs of our Judgment, than the Method of our Schools: And therefore I am for the old Way

Way in Schools ſtill, and Children will be furniſhed there with a Stock of Words at leaſt, when they come to know how to uſe them.

But, my Lord, Perſons of Your Lordſhip's Condition may be permitted to go out of the common Road, and try to learn Things and Words together: I am of Opinion, that Language may be attained by the Reverſe of the Method that is generally taken, and a Youth taught to know Grammar by Books, inſtead of Books by Grammar. This was Mr. *Cowley*'s Caſe, and in ſome Meaſure I may ſay it was my own at the ſame School, but it is

by no means generally practicable. However, there is no Necessity, where we are not tied up by the Course and Discipline, which must, if possible, be maintained in Schools, if we be not obliged by those Methods, there is no Necessity of burthening the Memory with an exact Repetition of the Rules: 'Tis enough from the Authors which are read, to learn the Use, and Application of them: And if, after this, a clear Explication of the Meaning were joined to the bare Grammatical Construction, young Scholars would be able to understand what they read, and be pleased to find

find that their Authors are made up of ſomething beſides the Eight Parts of Speech. Such a Method would indeed require more Pains in the Teacher, but thoſe would be well rewarded by the Progreſs and Satisfaction of the Scholar.

Your Lordſhip is beyond theſe Rules, and will judge of the Reaſonableneſs of them with reſpect to others, who are juſt entring on the Stage of Learning. I only give Your Lordſhip my Thoughts: I do not pretend to dictate.

Your Lordſhip will therefore give me Leave to conſider another Complaint againſt the pre-

ſent Method of Learning, taken from the Multitude of Notes and Comments, which crowd the Authors, and perplex the Reader. I muſt own, I have not that Reſpect for the Company of *Annotators*, which they generally meet with in the World. Some indeed muſt be excepted; but Youths are not capable of uſing the Beſt, and the Worſt are not worth regarding: For which Reaſon the Celebrated Dr. *BUSBY* ſtrictly forbad the Uſe of Notes, and for our *Greek* and *Latin* Authors we had nothing but the plain Text in a correct and chaſte Edition. Under ſuch a Maſter they could do no Good, there

there was no Need of the Beſt; and the others might do a great deal of Hurt, by infecting the Children at once with their own Blunders and Dulneſs.

Excepting thoſe of ſome very learned Men, Comments are generally an Art of making Authors difficult, under a Pretence of explaining them. And it hath been the hard Fortune of the beſt Writers to be perplexed with the Notes, and obſcured Illuſtrations. The Abilities of the Teacher will beſt ſupply the Defects of the Commentator, and it will be a Pleaſure to young Gentlemen, as he leads them along, to ſee from him the *Geography*, *Anti-*

quities, Customs and *History* of the Ancients. The *Poetical Story* is generally known, because diverting to be read; especially those that are acquainted with the *Metamorphoses* and *Apollodorus*, can be no Strangers to it; and all these together are the Foundation and Reason of all those Heaps of *Comments*, which are piled so high upon Authors, that it is difficult sometimes to clear the Text from the Rubbish, and draw it out of the Ruins.

If there is any Thing else Commentators concern themselves about, it is Propriety of Expression, or rather some Verbal Niceties, and Grammatical Scruples;

Scruples; for they have ſeldom Parts enough to diſcover the true Graces of their Authors, and thoſe Words, which in their Natural Situation ſhine like Jewels enchaſed in Gold, look, when tranſpoſed into their Notes, as if they were ſet in Lead, and adorned with that reſplendent Metal.

Setting theſe *grave Gentlemen* aſide, I have often wiſhed, my Lord, that ſome of the fineſt Wits would undertake the fineſt Writers in the World, and give us a Comment upon them to diſplay the Life and Beauty of their Authors: It requireth a Genius, like that wherewith they writ, to write upon them:

Every Man that understandeth *Latin* doth not understand either Greatness or Delicacy of Thought, Strength, or Beauty of Expression; and some critical Heads, such absolute Masters are they of their Passions, can bear the Raptures and Flights of Poets with a wonderful Command of Temper, and be no more affected with the most moving Strains, than if they were reading the heaviest Piece of their own Composing. They have no Notion of Life and Fire in Fancy and in Words, and any Thing that is just in Grammar and in Measure, provided always the Words be placed according

according to Art, is as good Oratory, and Poetry to them, as the best. 'Tis no Wonder, then, their Comments make the most sprightly Authors Phlegmatic and Dull, and that to read them with their bright Observations is like reading *Homer* in a Prose Translation.

"The great Art of Teaching, my Lord, is to give the "Learners a true Taste of their "Authors; to open the Beauties of their Thoughts and "Style; to shew them the "bright Parts, the peculiar "Excellencies, the Force and "Spirit, the Ease and Gentleness of their Writings: How "All is Uncommon, and All

" is

"is Natural, and every Thing "ſo thought and ſaid, that "upon the Occaſion it is "impoſſible to deliver better "Thoughts in better Words.

But this, my Lord, is not the Talent of Critics and Grammarians! They can give indeed the Rules of *Syntax* and of *Rhetoric*, and make a ſhift to exemplify them in a wretched Compoſition by bringing in every odd Exception in Grammar, every Figure and Scheme of Speech, Head and Shoulders, by main Force, in ſpite of Nature and their Subject. For be the Subject what it will, the Style and the Decorations are the ſame; ſo that their Diſcourſe having

having no Coherence, but the coupling Particles, looketh like a perfect Skeleton tacked together with Wires, ſtaring hollow, ſtiff and horrid, ſtripped of Senſe, without Nerves and Sinews, Life and Motion.

I will trouble Your Lordſhip no longer upon this Subject, and if I have ſaid any Thing to ſecure You againſt the Impreſſions of this poor Sort of Learning, I only intended a neceſſary Caution, and if ever theſe Sheets become more Publick, I hope no truly learned Man will be offended; I am ſure, I am very far from having any mean Thoughts of thoſe great Men who preſide in our chiefeſt

chiefeſt and moſt celebrated Schools; it is my Happineſs to be known to the moſt Eminent of them in a particular Manner, and they will acquit me of any Diſreſpect, where they know I have the greateſt Veneration; for with them the Genius of Claſſic Learning dwelleth, and from them it is derived. And I think myſelf honoured in the Acquaintance of ſome Maſters in the Country, who are not leſs Polite, than they are Learned, and to the exact Knowledge of the *Greek* and *Roman* Tongues have joined a true Taſte, and delicate Reliſh of the Claſſic Authors. But ſhould Your

Lord-

Lordſhip ever light into ſome formal Hands, though Your Senſe is too nice to reliſh thoſe Pedantries I have been remonſtrating againſt, when You come to underſtand them, yet for the preſent they may impoſe upon You with a grave Appearance; and, as Learning is commonly managed by ſuch Perſons, You may think them very *Learned*, becauſe they are very *Dull*. And if You ſhould receive the Tincture, while You are young, it may ſink too deep for all the Waters of *Helicon* to take out. You may be ſenſible of it as we are of ill Habits, which we regret, but cannot break, and ſo it

may

may mix with Your Studies for ever, and give bad Colours to every Thing You design, whether in Speech or Writing.

For, my Lord, these meaner Critics dress up their Entertainments so very Ill, that they will spoil Your Palate, and bring You to a vicious Taste. With them, as with distempered Stomachs, the finest Food and noblest Juices turn to nothing but Crudities and Indigestion. You will have no Notion of Delicacies, if You table with them; they are all for rank and foul Feeding, and spoil the best Provisions in the Cooking: You must be content to be taught

Parsi-

Parſimony in Senſe, and for Your moſt inoffenſive Food to live upon dry Meat and inſipid Stuff without any Poignancy or Reliſh.

So then, my Lord, theſe Gentlemen will never be able to form Your Taſte or Your Style, and thoſe who cannot give You a true Reliſh of the beſt Writers in the World, can never inſtruct You to write like them.

Give me Leave, my Lord, to touch this Subject, and draw out for Your Lordſhip's Uſe, ſome of the chief Strokes, ſome of the principal Lineaments, and faireſt Features of a juſt and beautiful Style. There is

no

nd Neceſſity of being methodical, and I will not entertain Your Lordſhip with a dry Syſtem upon the Matter, but with what Your Lordſhip will read with more Pleaſure, and I hope, with equal Profit, ſome deſultory Thoughts in their Native Order, as they riſe in my Mind without being reduced to Rules, and marſhalled according to Art.

I am ambitious, my Lord, to ſee You Maſter of a fine Pen; You have ſo many Advantages to command it, that You may eaſily excell; for as You have laid the neceſſary Foundation, if you raiſe upon it the beautiful Structure of Claſſic Learning, it

is

is impoſſible Your Lordſhip ſhould not ſtand upon the higheſt Eminence, and hold the firſt Rank with thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed for the Beauties of their Style. For beſide the common Accompliſhment of Claſſic Learning, Perſons of Your Lordſhip's Quality have ſo fine a Turn, ſo genteel an Air from their Breeding, and courtly Converſation in every Thing they write or ſpeak, that it giveth an inimitable Grace to their Words and Compoſitions; and I never knew a Nobleman equal in Learning to other Men, but he was ſuperior to them in the Delicacy and Civility of his Style. *Ceſar*

Cæsar, my Lord, writ like a Man of Quality, and among innumerable Excellencies, which he holdeth in Common with other Authors, he poſſeſſeth this almoſt peculiar to himſelf, that You ſee the *Prince* and the *Gentleman*, as well as the *Scholar* and the *Soldier* in his Memoirs. *Ovid* was all over a Man of Breeding, and perhaps if I may be allowed to make a Conjecture, the Copiouſneſs of his Expreſſions was owing in ſome Meaſure to the Civility of his Breeding, as well as to the Luxuriance of his Fancy; and indeed, my Lord, that is the Fault I have found in the Writings of Gentlemen,

tlemen, that ſometimes they overflow with Words. This proceedeth, I believe, from their daily Complaiſance, which runs them into Variety of Expreſſions on the ſame Subject; whereas Your Scholars are more cloſe, and as if their Learning were as narrow as their Fortune, they are frugal of their Words, and not willing to let any go for Ornament, if it will not ſerve for Uſe. Some People may call this a ſmall Piece of Criticiſm; all that I would prove by it, if it be not well founded, is, that *Ovid* was a Man of Breeding, and tho' *Virgil* and *Horace* were Courtiers too, yet they fell ſhort of him in Courtlineſs

lineſs of Expreſſion, however they exceeded him in Majeſty of Thought, in Cloſeneſs and Exactneſs of Style. And for *Horace*, my Lord, who was an humble Servant of the Ladies, as well as he, after we have acknowledged him a wonderful Genius, of a peculiar Happineſs of Expreſſion both in the ſublime, and familiar Way, we muſt aſcribe the Softneſs and Eaſineſs of Style to the Court and Love. In ſhort, my Lord, *Ovid* was a Gentleman, and the others not, his good Breeding was natural to him from his Infancy; theirs was acquired in their riper Years, and would never ſit ſo handſomely upon them.

them. *Terence*, my Lord, who was much Elder than they, may ſeem an Exception; there is no Addreſs more civil and accompliſhed than his throughout his Plays, and his Gentlemen appear truly ſuch upon all Occaſions, but this poſſibly may be accounted for more eaſily than ſome *Phænomena* in Philoſophy, if I may have Leave to ſuppoſe, that all the Aſſiſtance he received from *Scipio* and *Lælius* was in this Part of his Characters, and while the Comedian took Care to preſerve them in the Humour and Manners he had given them, his noble Friends might help him in giving them the true Turn of

Gentlemen. We have ſeveral others who are recorded for celebrated Wits among the *Nobility* and *Gentry* of *Rome*, but I need not detain Your Lordſhip any longer there.

After the Court of *Auguſtus*, we may mention the Court of King *Charles* the Second, and find my Lord *Rocheſter* and *Dorſet*, the Duke of *Buckingham* that was then, and the Duke of *Buckingham* that is now, Paramount in Wit, and as Graceful in their Writing as in their Perſons: The Wit of ſome of them indeed was ſcandalouſly abuſed, but otherwiſe their Satyr was Courtly, and their Poetry upon all other

Subjects

Subjects in the laſt Perfection. My Lord *Roſcommon*, inferior to none in Soundneſs of Judgment, ſurpaſſeth them in the Innocency and Uſefulneſs of his Writings: Sir *Robert Howard*, Sir *Charles Sidley*, Sir *John Denham*, Mr. *Waller*, Mr. *Walſh*, and I may add Sir *George Etherege*, writ like themſelves; their Learning and Quality adorn each other, and You read their Education as Gentlemen, as well as Scholars, in their Compoſitions. Mr. *Dryden*, *Oldham*, and other celebrated Wits, I forbear to name, becauſe they want that diſtinguiſhing Character of Affability, Courteſy and fine Breeding in their

Works, or I may name them upon Comparison with the others to show the Difference, and maintain my Point. Mr. *Dryden* was indeed a Gentleman, but he writ more like a Scholar, and tho' the greatest Master of Poetry the last Age could boast, he wanted that Easiness and Familiarity, that Air of Freedom and Unconstraint, that gentle and accomplished Manner of Expression, which is more sensibly to be perceived, than described.

To come to the present Times, my Lord *Halifax* beareth a Title consecrated to Wit, and if he doth not reach the *Saville* Family in Heighth of

of Quality, he doth not fall below them in the Excellency of his Pen, and in Poetry he ſoareth above them. Mr. *Granville* is the Poetical Son of *Waller*: We obſerved with Pleaſure Similitude of Wit in the Difference of Years, and in Mr. *Granville* do meet at once the Fire of his Father's Youth, and the Judgment of his Age. Others I forbear, becauſe tho' a thouſand Occaſions teſtify their Abilities, their Modeſty hath hitherto concealed their Works and Names; only give me Leave to add, it is the Opinion of ſome good Judges, that if the Duke of *Marlborough* would give us his own *Me-*

moirs, we ſhould find he could *Write*, as well as *Fight*, like *Cæſar*. I am fallen from Verſe to Proſe, my Lord, and here I muſt not paſs by Sir *William Temple*, the moſt perfect Pattern of good *Writing* and good *Breeding* this Nation hath produced. Perhaps Mr. *Boyle*'s Book in Defence of *Phalaris* will be charged upon ſome *Sophiſt* too, but taking it for *Genuine* at preſent, if we own Dr. *Bentley* is the better Critic, we muſt acknowledge my Lord *Orrery* is much the genteeleſt Writer.

The Obſervation I have made is ſo univerſal, it were endleſs to purſue it in any farther

farther Examples, and, my Lord, ſome few Inſtances excepted, there is as much Difference between the Writings of Men of Quality and Scholars, as there is in the Behaviour of a *Dancing Maſter* and a *Gentleman*.

Your Lordſhip ſtandeth upon ſuch Advantage of Ground, that, when You have finiſhed Your Studies, You need only write, and You will excell. Your Education giveth You the moſt difficult Part, and that Faſineſs and handſome Addreſs in Writing, which is hardeſt to be attained by Perſons bred in a meaner Way, will be Familiar to

Your Lordſhip. And if ever You do write, You will write as You ſpeak, with all the Civility and good Breeding in the World. This, my Lord, will certainly be the happy Turn of Your Pen: Nothing can be wanting, but a Store of ſound Learning to be put into ſo genteel a Dreſs; and when Your Lordſhip ſhall have furniſhed Yourſelf with that, and come to know the Correctneſs of Style, the Graces and Beauties of it will be Natural and Charming in all Your Compoſitions.

To aſſiſt Your Lordſhip therefore, as far as Art may be an Help to Nature, I ſhall proceed to ſay ſomething of what is required

quired in a finished Piece to make it complete in all its Parts, and Masterly in the Whole.

I would not lay down any impracticable Schemes, nor trouble Your Lordship with a dry formal Method. The Rule of Writing, like that of our Duty, is perfect in its Kind; but we must make Allowances for the Infirmities of Nature, and since *none is without his Faults*, the most that can be said, is, that *He is the best Writer, against whom the Fewest can be alledged.*

"A Composition is then perfect, my Lord, when the "Matter riseth out of the Sub-

" ject, when the Thoughts are
" agreeable to the Matter, and
" the Expreſſions ſuitable to
" the Thoughts, when there
" is no Inconſiſtency from the
" Beginning to the End; when
" the whole is perſpicuous in
" the beautiful Order of its
" Parts, and formed in due
" Symmetry and Proportion.

It is the common Abſurdity of raw and injudicious Writers to propoſe one Thing for their Subject, and run off to another: They are not Maſters of what they undertake, the Compaſs of their Knowledge is too narrow, and their Shoulders are too weak to ſuſtain the Work. From this fundamental

mental Error flow all the other Vices and Corruptions of Writing; Matter foreign to the Subject; wild, incoherent Fancies inſtead of Thought, and Expreſſions that have no other Commendation, than that they are as Childiſh as their Thoughts. What crude undigeſted Volumes of this Sort have we ſeen? How many tedious Sheets without Argument or Conſiſtency? Such, my Lord, are many of the *Diſſenters* Writings in Point of Faith, Doctrine and Practice, tho' we have but few of their Practical Pieces, and thoſe we have, that are of any Value, were written by the beſt Pens among them.

But when a Man throughly understandeth his Subject, and knoweth what is consistent, or inconsistent with it, he will write upon it with more or less Applause, according to the Scope and Compass of his Thoughts: Some are bound up in narrow Schemes of Things, while Men of Genius and freer Spirits look abroad into Nature, and discover a thousand beautiful Relations that lye concealed to those, who trade only in dry Schemes and Systems. Our Thoughts must be conformable to the Matter and Subject that lye before us, but we have full Liberty to range, provided we can command our

Fancy,

Fancy, and bring it home to the Purpose. The Thought may be either too narrow, or too wide; too poor and mean to give either Life, or Light to our Writings, or too wandring and distant to bear any Relation to the Subject. I am not speaking of the Brightness and Beauty, but of the Propriety of Thought; though, if the Thoughts be bright and beautiful, as well as proper, they add, no doubt, a Grace and Splendor to the Discourse; only let the Thoughts be just, and it dependeth upon the Genius of the Writer to give them more Force and Fire. *Horace* hath drawn the Picture of those

absurd

abſurd Painters and Poets, that join a Woman's Head to a Fiſh's Tail, and crowd Contradictions in the ſame Piece together. He hath expoſed and ridiculed thoſe trifling Poetaſters, that ſpend themſelves in glaring Deſcriptions, and would compenſate for their Dulneſs and Incapacity, by ſewing here and there ſome Cloth of Gold on their Sackcloth. All inconſiderate Writers, or Writers not furniſhed for Conſideration, are the ſame. Their Imagination either rambles, or is low and dull, either it cannot riſe to the Subject, or wandereth from it. 'Tis nothing but a Vapour and falſe Fire, and if in reading

thoſe wretched Scriblers we look for any Meaning, we only follow an *Ignis fatuus* till we are tired.

Some Peoples Heads are either ſo empty, or ſo diſconcerted, that nothing is more removed from the Matter they have laid out to treat on, than their Thoughts; and if it ſometimes happeneth that they do not wander quite away from their Purpoſe, the Misfortune is, that on the graveſt, nobleſt Subjects, their Thoughts are light and fooliſh, poor and mean, and on the moſt inconſiderable, trifling Matters, they are all Noiſe and Bombaſt, Affecting Splendor and Magnificence

cence in Things that will endure neither Light nor Ornament, ever rising where they should sink, and falling where they should rise.

There is a Chain of Relations in Nature, which must not be broken, nor twisted with any other String: The whole World of Being, the Qualities, Properties, Accidents and Affections of Things are distributed into proper Classes, as they are compatible or inconsistent with one another. Propriety of Thought therefore must arise from a competent Knowledge of the Nature and Decency of Things; in being acquainted with what is capable of being said, and

what

what is fit to be ſpoken upon any Subject. And Thought is then in the laſt Perfection, when it is ſo bright, ſo lively, ſo juſt, ſo full, that on the ſame Subject You cannot invent any, Finer, or more Proper in the whole Compaſs of Nature and Imagination.

There is a cloſe Connection between the Thoughts and Words, and when a Man hath throughly digeſted the one, the other will follow not only with Eaſe, but Propriety, when he is a perfect Maſter of the Language he writeth in. It muſt be a great Fault of the Judgment, if where the Thoughts are proper, the Expreſſions

preſſions are not ſo too: A Diſagreement between theſe ſeldom happens, but among Men of more recondite Studies, and what they call deep Learning, eſpecially among Your Antiquaries and Schoolmen.

In every ſprightly Genius, the Expreſſion will ever be lively as the Thoughts. All the Danger is, that a Wit too fruitful ſhould run out into unneceſſary Branches; but when it is matured by Age, and corrected by Judgment, the Writer will prune the luxuriant Boughs, and cut off the ſuperfluous Shoots of Fancy, thereby giving both Strength and Beauty to his Work.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, my Lord, this Piece of Diſcipline is to young Writers the greateſt Self-Denial in the World. To confine the Fancy, to ſtifle the Birth, much more to throw away the beautiful Offspring of the Brain, is a Trial, that none but the moſt delicate and lively Wits can be put to. It is their Praiſe, that they are obliged to retrench more Wit, than others have to laviſh: The Chippings and Filings of theſe Jewels, could they be preſerved, are of more Value, than the whole Maſs of ordinary Authors; and it is a *Maxim* with me, that *He hath not Wit enough, who hath not a great deal to ſpare.*

My

My Lord, it is by no means necessary for me to run out into the several Sorts of Writing: We have general Rules to judge of all without being Particular upon any, tho' the Style of an *Orator* be different from that of an *Historian*, and a *Poet's* from both.

The Design of Expression is to convey our Thoughts truly and clearly to the World, in such a manner, as is most probable to attain the End we propose, in communicating what we have conceived to the Publick; and therefore Men have not thought it enough to write plainly unless they wrote agreeably, so as to engage the Attention,

Attention, and work upon the Affections, as well as inform the Underſtanding of their Readers; for which Reaſon all Arts have been invented to make their Writings pleaſing, as well as profitable; and thoſe Arts are very commendable and honeſt: They are no Trick, no Deluſion, or Impoſition on the Senſes and Underſtanding of Mankind, for they are founded in Nature, and formed upon obſerving her Operations in all the various Paſſions, and Workings of our Minds.

To this we owe all the Beauties and Embelliſhments of Style. All Figures and Schemes of Speech, and thoſe ſeveral Decora-

Decorations that are uſed in Writings to enliven and adorn the Work. The Flouriſhes of Fancy reſemble the Flouriſhes of the Pen in Mechanick Writers, and the Illuminators of Manuſcripts, and of the Preſs, borrowed their Title perhaps from the Illumination, which a bright Genius every where giveth to his Work, and diſperſeth through his Compoſition.

The Commendation of this Art of Enlightening and Adorning a Subject, lyeth in a right Diſtribution of the Shades and Light. It is in Writing, as in Picture, in which the Art is to obſerve where the Lights

Lights will fall, to produce the moſt beautiful Parts to the Day, and caſt in Shades what we cannot hope will ſhine to Advantage.

It were endleſs to purſue this Subject through all the Ornaments and Illuſtrations of Speech, and yet I would not diſmiſs it without pointing at the general Rules, and neceſſary Qualifications required in thoſe, who would attempt to ſhine in the Productions of their Pen. And therefore Your Lordſhip muſt pardon me if I ſeem to go back, for we cannot raiſe any regular and durable Pile of Building without laying a firm Foundation.

The

The first Thing requisite, my Lord, to a *just Style* is a perfect Mastery in the Language we write in; this is not so easily attained, as is commonly imagined, and dependeth upon a competent Knowledge of the Force and Propriety of Words, a good natural Taste of Strength and Delicacy, and all the Beauties of Expression. It is my own Opinion, that all the Rules and critical Observations in the World will never bring a Man to a *just Style*, who hath not of himself a natural easy Way of Writing; but they will improve a good Genius, where Nature leadeth the Way, provided he is not

too

too ſcrupulous, and doth not make himſelf a Slave to his Rules, for that will introduce a Stiffneſs and Affectation, which are utterly abhorrent from all good Writing.

By a perfect Maſtery in any Language, I underſtand not only a ready Command of Words, upon every Occaſion, not only the Force, and Propriety of Words, as to their Senſe, and Signification, but more eſpecially the Purity, and Idiom of the Language; for in this a perfect Maſtery doth conſiſt. 'Tis to know what is *Engliſh*, and what is *Latin*, what is *French*, *Spaniſh*, or *Italian*, to be able

to mark the Bounds of each Language we write in, to point out the diſtinguiſhing Characters, and the peculiar Phraſes of each Tongue. What Expreſſions, or Manner of Expreſſing is common to any Language beſides our own, and what is properly and peculiarly our Phraſe, and Way of Speaking. For this is to ſpeak or write *Engliſh* in Purity and Perfection, to let the Streams run clear and unmix'd, without taking in other Languages in the Courſe: In *Engliſh* therefore, I would have all *Galliciſms* (for Inſtance) avoided, that our Tongue may be ſincere, that we may keep

to

to our own Language, and not follow the *French* Mode in our Speech, as we do in our Cloaths. It is convenient and profitable ſometimes to import a Foreign Word, and naturalize the Phraſe of another Nation; but this is very ſparingly to be allowed, and every Syllable of Foreign Growth ought immediately to be diſcarded, if its Uſe and Ornament to our Language be not very evident.

While the *Romans* ſtudied, and uſed the *Greek* Tongue, only to improve and adorn their own, the *Latin* flouriſhed, and grew every Year more Copious, more Elegant, and Expreſſive; but in a few

Years, after the Ladies and Beaux of *Rome* affected to ſpeak *Greek*, and regarded nothing but the Softneſs and Effeminacy of that noble Language, they weakned and corrupted their own: And the monſtrous Affectation of our travelled Ladies and Gentlemen to ſpeak in the *French* Air, *French* Tone, *French* Terms, to dreſs, to cook, to write, to court in *French*, corrupted at once our Language and our Manners, and introduced an abominable Gallimaufry of *French* and *Engliſh* mixed together, that made the Innovators ridiculous to all Men of Senſe. The *French* Tongue hath undoubtedly its

Graces

Graces and Beauties, and I am not againſt any real Improvement of our own Language from that or any other; but we are always ſo fooliſh, or unfortunate, as never to make any Advantage of our Neighbours. We affect Nothing of theirs, but what is ſilly and ridiculous; and by neglecting the ſubſtantial Uſe of their Language, we only enervate, and ſpoil our own.

Languages, like our Bodies, are in a perpetual Flux, and ſtand in need of Recruits to ſupply the Place of thoſe Words that are continually falling off thro' Diſuſe; and ſince it is ſo, my Lord, I think 'tis better to

raiſe them at Home, than Abroad. We had better rely on our own Troops than foreign Forces, and I believe we have ſufficient Strength and Numbers within ourſelves: There is a vaſt Treaſure, an inexhauſtible Fund in the old *Engliſh*, from whence Authors may draw conſtant Supplies, as our Officers make their ſureſt Recruits from the Coal-Works and the Mines. The Weight, the Strength, and Significancy of many antiquated Words, ſhould recommend them to Uſe again. 'Tis only wiping off the Ruſt they have contracted, and ſeparating them from the Droſs they lie mingled with, and both

both in Value and Beauty they will riſe above the Standard, rather than fall below it.

Perhaps our Tongue is not ſo muſical to the Ear, nor ſo abundant in Multiplicity of Words; but its Strength is real, and its Words are therefore the more expreſſive: The peculiar Character of our Language is, that it is cloſe, compact, and full; and our Writings (if your Lordſhip will excuſe two *Latin Words*) come neareſt to what *Tully* means by his *Preſſa Oratio.* They are all Weight, and Subſtance, good Meaſure preſſed together, and running over in a Redundancy of Senſe, and not of Words. And therefore

the Purity of our Language conſiſteth in preſerving this Character, in writing with the *Engliſh Strength* and *Spirit*: Let us not envy others, that they are more ſoft, diffuſed, and rarified; be it our Commendation to write as we pay in true *Sterling*; if we want Supplies, we had better revive old Words, than create new Ones. I look upon our Language as good Bullion, if we do not debaſe it with too much Allay; and let me leave this Cenſure with Your Lordſhip, That he who corrupteth the Purity of the *Engliſh* Tongue with the moſt ſpecious foreign Words and Phraſes, is juſt as wiſe as thoſe Modiſh

Modiſh Ladies that change their Plate for China: For which, my Lord, I think the laudable Traffick of old Cloaths is much the faireſt Barter.

After this Regard to the Purity of our Language, the next Quality of a juſt Style is its Plainneſs, and Perſpicuity. My Lord, this is the greateſt Commendation we can give an Author, and the beſt Argument that he is Maſter of the Language he writeth in, and the Subject he writeth upon, when we underſtand him, and ſee into the Scope and Tendency of his Thoughts, as we read him. All Obſcurity of Expreſſion, and Darkneſs of Senſe, do

ariſe from the Confuſion of the Writer's Thoughts, and his Want of proper Words. If a Man hath not a clear Perception of the Matters he undertaketh to treat of, be his Style never ſo plain as to the Words he uſeth, it never can be clear; and if his Thoughts upon his Subject be never ſo juſt, and diſtinct; unleſs he hath a ready Command of Words, and a Faculty of eaſy Writing in plain obvious Expreſſions, the Words will perplex the Senſe, and cloud the Clearneſs of his Thoughts.

It is the Unhappineſs of ſome, that they are not able to expreſs themſelves clearly: Their

Their Heads are crowded with a Multiplicity of undigeſted Knowledge, which lieth confuſed in the Brain, without any Order or Diſtinction. It is the Vice of others, to affect Obſcurity in their Thoughts and Language, to write in a difficult crabbed Style, and perplex the Reader with an intricate Meaning in more intricate Words.

The common Way of offending againſt Plainneſs and Perſpicuity of Style is, an Affectation of hard unuſual Words, and of cloſe contracted Periods: The Fault of Pedants and ſententious Writers! that are vainly oſtentatious of their Learning, or their Wiſdom. Hard

Words and quaint Expreſſions are abominable: Wherever Your Lordſhip meeteth ſuch a Writer, throw him aſide for a Coxcomb. Some Authors of Reputation have uſed a ſhort and conciſe Way of Expreſſion, I muſt own; and if they are not ſo clear as others, the Fault is to be laid on the *Brevity* they *labour* after: *For while we ſtudy to be conciſe, we can hardly avoid being obſcure.* We crowd our Thoughts into too ſmall a Compaſs, and are ſo ſparing of our Words, that we will not afford enow to expreſs our Meaning.

There is another Extreme in obſcure Writers, my Lord, not

not much taken notice of, which ſome empty conceited Heads are apt to run into, out of a Prodigality of Words, and a Want of Senſe. This is the Extravagance of your copious Writers, who loſe their Meaning in the Multitude of Words, and bury their Senſe under Heaps of Phraſes. Their Underſtanding is rather rarified, than condenſed: Their Meaning, we cannot ſay, is dark and thick; it is too light and ſubtle to be diſcerned; it is ſpread ſo thin, and diffuſed ſo wide, that it is hard to be collected. Two Lines would expreſs all they ſay in two Pages: 'Tis nothing but whipt Syllabub

bub and Froth, a little Varnish, and Gilding, without any Solidity, or Substance.

My Lord, the deepest Rivers have the plainest Surface, and the purest Waters are always clearest. Crystal is not the less solid for being transparent; the Value of a Style riseth like the Value of precious Stones. If it be dark and cloudy, it is in vain to polish it: It beareth its Worth in its Native Looks, and the same Art which enhanceth its Price, when it is clear, only debaseth it, if it be dull.

Your Lordship seeth I have borrowed some Metaphors to explain my Thoughts, and it is, I believe, impossible to describe the

the Plainneſs and Clearneſs of Style, without ſome Expreſſions clearer than the Terms I am otherwiſe bound up to uſe.

Your Lordſhip muſt give me Leave to go on with You to the Decorations and Ornaments of Style: There is no Inconſiſtency between the Plainneſs and Perſpicuity, and the Ornament of Writing. A Style, my Lord, reſembleth Beauty, where the Face is clear and plain as to Symmetry and Proportion, but is capable of wonderful Improvements, as to Features and Complexion. If I may tranſgreſs in too frequent Alluſions, becauſe I would make every Thing plain to

Your

Your Lordſhip, I would paſs on from Painters to Statuarys, whoſe Excellence it is, at firſt to form true and juſt Proportions, and afterwards to give them that Softneſs, that Expreſſion, that Strength, and Delicacy, which make them almoſt breathe, and live.

My Lord, the Decorations of Style are formed out of thoſe ſeveral Schemes and Figures, which are contrived to expreſs the Paſſions and Motions of our Minds in our Speech; to give Life and Ornament, Grace and Beauty, to our Expreſſions. I ſhall not undertake the Rhetoricians Province, in giving Your Lordſhip an Account of all

all the Figures they have invented, and thoſe ſeveral Ornaments of Writing, whoſe Grace and Commendation lie in being uſed with Judgment and Propriety. It were endleſs to purſue this Subject thro' all the Schemes and Illuſtrations of Speech: But there are ſome common Forms, which every Writer upon every Subject may uſe, to enliven and adorn his Work.

Theſe, my Lord, are Metaphor, and Similitude, and thoſe Images and Repreſentations, that are drawn in the ſtrongeſt, and moſt lively Colours, to imprint what the Writer would have his Readers con-

conceive more deeply on their Minds. In the Choice, and in the Uſe of theſe, your ordinary Writers are moſt apt to offend. Images are very ſparingly to be introduced; their proper Place is in Poems and Orations, and their Uſe is to move Pity or Terror, Admiration, Compaſſion, Anger and Reſentment, by repreſenting ſomething very affectionate, or very dreadful, very aſtoniſhing, very miſerable, or very provoking to our Thoughts. They give a wonderful Force and Beauty to the Subject, where they are painted by a Maſterly Hand; but if they are either weakly drawn, or unskilfully placed, they raiſe

no

no Paſſion but Indignation in the Reader.

The moſt common Ornaments, my Lord, are Metaphor and Similitude. One is an Alluſion to Words, the other to Things; and both have their Beauties, if properly applied.

Similitudes ought to be drawn from the moſt familiar and beſt known Particulars in the World: If any Thing is dark and obſcure in them, the Purpoſe of uſing them is defeated; and that which is not clear itſelf, can never give Light to any Thing that wants it. It is the idle Fancy of ſome poor Brains, to run out perpetually into

into a Courſe of Similitudes, confounding their Subject by the Multitude of Likeneſſes, and making it like ſo many Things, that it is like Nothing at all. This trifling Humour is good for nothing, but to convince us, that the Author is in the dark himſelf; and while he is likening his Subject to every Thing, he knoweth not what it is like.

There is another tedious Fault in ſome *Simile Men*, which is drawing their Compariſons into a great Length and Minute Particulars, where it is of no Importance, whether the Reſemblance holdeth or no. But the true Art of illuſtrating any

any Subject by Similitude, is, firſt, to pitch on ſuch a Reſemblance as all the World will agree in; and then, without being careful to have it run on all Four, to touch it only in the ſtrongeſt Lines, and the neareſt Likeneſs. And this will ſecure us, my Lord, from all Stiffneſs and Formality in Similitude, and deliver us from the nauſeous Repetition of *As* and *So*, which ſome *ſo ſo* Writers, if I may beg Leave to call them *ſo*, are continually ſounding in our Ears.

I have Nothing to ſay, my Lord, to thoſe Gentlemen, who bring Similitudes, and forget the Reſemblance. All the

Pleaſure

Pleaſure we can take, when we meet theſe promiſing Sparks, is in the Diſappointment, where we find their Fancy is ſo like their Subject, that it is not like at all.

Metaphors, my Lord, require great Judgment and Conſideration in the Uſe of them. They are a ſhorter Similitude, where the Likeneſs is rather implied than expreſſed. The Signification of one Word in Metaphors is transferred to another, and we talk of one Thing in the Terms and Propriety of another. But, my Lord, there muſt be a common Reſemblance, ſome Original Likeneſs in Nature, ſome Correſpondence and

eaſy

eaſy Tranſition, or Metaphors are ſhocking and confuſed.

The Beauty of them diſplays itſelf in their Eaſineſs and Propriety, where they are naturally introduced; but where they are forced, and crowded, too frequent and various, and do not riſe out of the Courſe of Thought, but are conſtrained and preſſed into the Service, inſtead of making the Diſcourſe more lively and cheerful, they make it ſullen, dull and gloomy.

Your Lordſhip muſt form Your Judgment upon the beſt Models, and the moſt celebrated Pens, where you will find the Metaphor in all its Grace and

and Strength, ſhedding a Luſtre and Beauty on the Work. For it ought never to be uſed, but when it giveth greater Force to the Sentence, an Illuſtration to the Thought, and inſinuateth a ſilent Argument in the Alluſion. The Uſe of Metaphors is not only to convey the Thought in a more pleaſing Manner, but to give it a ſtronger Impreſſion, and enforce it on the Mind. Where this is not regarded, they are vain, and trifling Traſh; and in a due Obſervance of this, in a pure, chaſte, natural Expreſſion, conſiſt the Juſtneſs, Beauty, and Delicacy of Style.

I have

I have ſaid nothing of Epithets; their Buſineſs is to expreſs the Nature of the Things they are applied to; and the Choice of them dependeth upon a good Judgment, to diſtinguiſh what are the moſt proper Titles to be given on all Occaſions, and a complete Knowledge in the Accidents, Qualities, and Affections of every Thing in the World. They are of moſt Ornament when they are of Uſe; They are to determine the Character of every Perſon, and decide the Merits of every Cauſe; Conſcience and Juſtice are to be regarded, and great Skill and Exactneſs are required in the uſe of them.

For it is of great Importance to call Things by their right Names: The Points of Satyr, and Strains of Compliment depend upon it, otherwiſe we may make an Aſs of a Lion, commend a Man in Satyr, and lampoon him in Panegyric. Here alſo, my Lord, there is room for Genius: Common Juſtice, and Judgment ſhould direct us to ſay what is proper at leaſt, but it is Parts and Fire that will prompt us to the moſt lively, and moſt forcible Epithets, that can be applied; and 'tis in their Energy and Propriety, their Beauty lieth.

Allegories I need not mention, becauſe they are not ſo much

much any Ornament of Style, as an artful Way of recommending Truth to the World in a borrowed Shape, and a Dreſs more agreeable to the Fancy, than naked Truth herſelf can be. Truth is ever moſt beautiful and evident in her Native Dreſs: And the Arts, that are uſed to convey her to our Minds, are no Argument that ſhe is deficient, but ſo many Teſtimonies of the Corruption of our Nature, when Truth, of all Things the plaineſt and ſincereſt, is forced to gain Admittance to us in Diſguiſe, and court us in Maſquerade.

My Lord, there is one Ingredient more required to the Perfection of Style, which I have partly mentioned already in ſpeaking of the Suitableneſs of the Thoughts to the Subject, and of the Words to the Thoughts; but Your Lordſhip will give me Leave to conſider it in another Light with regard to the Majeſty and Dignity of the Subject.

It is fit, as we have ſaid already, that the Thoughts and Expreſſion ſhould be ſuited to the Matter on all Occaſions; but in nobler and greater Subjects, eſpecially where the Theme is Sacred and Divine, it muſt be our Care to think and write up

to

to the Dignity and Majeſty of the Things we preſume to treat of: Nothing little, mean, or low, no childiſh Thoughts, or boyiſh Expreſſions will be endured: All muſt be awful and grave, and great, and ſolemn. The nobleſt Sentiments muſt be conveyed in the weightieſt Words: All Ornaments and Illuſtrations muſt be borrowed from the richeſt Parts of univerſal Nature; and in Divine Subjects, eſpecially when we attempt to ſpeak of GOD, of His Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power, of His Mercy and Juſtice, of His Diſpenſations and Providence, by all which He is pleaſed to manifeſt Him-

ſelf to the Sons of Men, we muſt raiſe our Thoughts, and enlarge our Minds, and ſearch all the Treaſures of Knowledge for every Thing that is great, wonderful and magnificent: We can only expreſs our Thoughts of the Creator in the Works of His Creation; and the brighteſt of theſe can only give us ſome faint Shadows of His Greatneſs and His Glory. The ſtrongeſt Figures are too weak, the moſt exalted Language too low to expreſs His ineffable Excellence. No *Hyperbole* can be brought to heighten our Thoughts, for in ſo ſublime a Theme nothing can be *Hyperbolical*. The Riches of Imagination

nation are poor, and all the Rivers of Eloquence are dry in ſupplying Thought on an infinite Subject. How poor and mean, how baſe and grovelling, are the Heathen Conceptions of the Deity! ſomething Sublime and Noble muſt needs be ſaid on ſo great an Occaſion, but in this great Article the moſt Celebrated of the Heathen Pens ſeem to flag and ſink, they bear up in no Proportion to the Dignity of the Theme, as if they were depreſſed by the Weight, and dazled with the Splendor of the Subject.

We have no Inſtances to produce of any Writers that riſe at all to the Majeſty and Dig-

nity of the Divine Attributes, except the Sacred Pen-Men. No leſs than Divine Inſpiration could enable Men to write worthily of GOD, and none but the Spirit of GOD knew how to expreſs His Greatneſs, and diſplay His Glory: In Compariſon of theſe Divine Writers, the greateſt *Genius's*, and nobleſt Wits of the Heathen World are low and dull. The ſublime Majeſty, and royal Magnificence of the Scripture Poems are above the Reach, and beyond the Power of all mortal Wit. Take the beſt and livelieſt Poems of Antiquity, and read them, as we do the Scriptures, in a Proſe Tranſlation, and they are flat and

and poor. *Horace*, and *Virgil*, and *Homer*, loſe their Spirits and their Strength in the Tranſfuſion, to that Degree, that we have hardly Patience to read them. But, my Lord, the Sacred Writings, even in our Tranſlation, preſerve their Majeſty and their Glory, and very far ſurpaſs the brighteſt and nobleſt Compoſitions of *Greece* and *Rome*. And this is not owing to the Richneſs and Solemnity of the Eaſtern Eloquence, for it holdeth in no other Inſtance, but to the Divine Direction and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Writers. For, let me only make this Remark, that the moſt literal Tranſlation of the Scri-

ptures, in the moſt natural Signification of the Words, is generally the beſt; and the ſame Punctualneſs, which debaſeth other Writings, preſerveth the Spirit and Majeſty of the Sacred Text: It can ſuffer no Improvement from human Wit, and we may obſerve, that thoſe who have preſumed to heighten the Expreſſions, by a poetical Tranſlation or Paraphraſe, have ſunk in the Attempt, and all the Decorations of their Verſe, whether *Greek* or *Latin*, have not been able to reach the Dignity, the Majeſty, and Solemnity of our Proſe: So that the Proſe of Scripture cannot be improved by Verſe, and even

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the Divine Poetry is moſt like itſelf in Proſe. One Obſervation more I would leave with Your Lordſhip; *Milton* himſelf, as great a Genius as he was, oweth his Superiority over *Homer* and *Virgil*, in Majeſty of Thought and Splendor of Expreſſion, to the Scriptures: They are the Fountain from which he derived his Light; the Sacred Treaſure that enriched his Fancy, and furniſhed him with all the Truth and Wonders of GOD and His Creation, of Angels and Men, which no mortal Brain was able either to diſcover or conceive; And in Him, my Lord, of all human Writers, You will meet all his

Sentiments and Words raiſed and ſuited to the Greatneſs and Dignity of the Subject.

I have detained Your Lordſhip the longer on this Majeſty of Style, being, perhaps, myſelf carried away with the Greatneſs and Pleaſure of the Contemplation; what I have dwelt ſo much on, with reſpect to Divine Subjects, is more eaſily to be obſerved with reference to Human: For in all Things below Divinity, we are rather able to exceed than fall ſhort; and in Adorning all other Subjects, our Words and Sentiments may riſe in a juſt Proportion to them; Nothing is above the Reach of Man, but Heaven;

and

and the ſame Wit can raiſe a *Human* Subject, that only debaſeth a *Divine*.

After all theſe Excellencies of Style, in Purity, in Plainneſs and Perſpicuity, in Ornament and Majeſty, are conſidered, a finiſhed Piece of what kind ſoever, muſt ſhine in the Order and Proportion of the Whole; For Light riſeth out of Order, and Beauty from Proportion. In Architecture and Painting, theſe fill and relieve the Eye. A juſt Diſpoſition giveth us a clear View of the Whole at once, and the due Symmetry and Proportion of every Part in itſelf, and of all together, leave no Vacancy in

our

our Thoughts or Eyes; Nothing is wanting, every Thing is complete, and we are ſatisfied in Beholding.

But, my Lord, when I ſpeak of Order and Proportion, I do not intend any ſtiff and formal Method, but only a proper Diſtribution of the Parts in general, where they follow in a natural Courſe, and are not confounded with one another. Laying down a Scheme, and marking out the Diviſions and Subdiviſions of a Diſcourſe are only neceſſary in Syſtems, and ſome Pieces of Controverſy and Argumentation; Your Lordſhip ſees, however, that I have ventured to write without any declared

clared Order; and this is allowable, where the Method opens as You read, and the Order diſcovereth itſelf in the Progreſs of the Subject: But certainly, my Lord, of all Pieces that were ever written in a profeſſed and ſtated Method, and diſtinguiſhed by the Number and Succeſſion of their Parts, our *Engliſh Sermons* are the completeſt in Order and Proportion; the Method is ſo eaſy and natural, the Parts bear ſo juſt a Proportion to one another, that among many others, this may paſs for a peculiar Commendation of them: For thoſe Diviſions and Particulars which obſcure and perplex other Writings,

tings, give a clearer Light to Ours. All that I would inſinuate, therefore, is only this, that it is not neceſſary to lay the Method we uſe before the Reader, only to write, and then he will read, in Order.

But it requireth, my Lord, a full Command of the Subject, a diſtinct View to keep it always in Sight, or elſe without ſome Method firſt deſigned, we ſhall be in Danger of loſing it, and wandring after it, till we have loſt ourſelves, and bewildered the Reader.

A preſcribed Method is neceſſary for weaker Heads, but the Beauty of Order is its Freedom and Unconſtraint; It muſt

be

be diſperſed and ſhine in all the Parts thro' the whole Performance, but there is no Neceſſity of Writing in Trammels, when we can move more at eaſe without them; neither is the Proportion of Writing to be meaſured out like the Proportions of a Horſe, where every Part muſt be drawn in the minuteſt Reſpect to the Size and Bigneſs of the reſt, but it is to be taken by the Mind, and formed upon a general View and Conſideration of the Whole. The Statuary that carveth *Hercules* in Stone, or caſts him in Braſs may be obliged to take his Dimenſions from his Foot, but the Poet that deſcribeth him is not

bound

bound up to the Geometers Rule, nor is an Author under any Obligation to write by the Scale.

These Hints will serve to give Your Lordship some Notion of Order and Proportion, and I must not dwell too long upon them, lest I transgress the Rules I am laying down.

My Lord, I shall make no formal Recapitulation of what I have delivered. Out of all these Rules together, rises a just Style, and a perfect Composition. All the Latitude, that can be admitted, is in the Ornament of Writing; we do not require every Author to shine in Gold and Jewels: There is a Moderation

ration to be uſed in the Pomp and Trappings of a Diſcourſe: It is not neceſſary that every Part ſhould be embelliſhed and adorned, but the Decorations ſhould be skilfully diſtributed thro' the Whole: Too full and glaring a Light is offenſive, and confounds the Eyes: In Heaven itſelf there are Vacancies and Spaces between the Stars; and the Day is not leſs Beautiful for being interſperſed with Clouds: They only moderate the Brightneſs of the Sun, and without diminiſhing from his Splendor, guild and adorn themſelves with his Rays. But to deſcend from the Skies, my Lord, 'tis in Writing as in Dreſs. The richeſt

richeſt Habits are not always the completeſt, and a Gentleman may make a better Figure in a plain Suit, than in an embroidered Coat. The Dreſs dependeth upon the Imagination, but muſt be adjuſted by the Judgment, contrary to the Opinion of the Ladies, who value nothing but a good Fancy in the Choice of their Clothes. The firſt Excellence is to write in Purity plainly and clearly; there is no Diſpenſation from theſe, but afterwards You have Your Choice of Colours, and may enliven, adorn, and paint Your Subject as You pleaſe.

In Writing, the Rules have a Relation and Dependence on

one

one another. They are held in one ſocial Bond, and joined, like the Moral Virtues, and Liberal Arts, in a ſort of Harmony and Concord. He that cannot write pure, plain *Engliſh*, muſt never pretend to write at all; 'tis in vain for him to dreſs and adorn his Diſcourſe, the finer he endeavoureth to make it, he maketh it only the more ridiculous. And on the other ſide, let a Man write in the exacteſt Purity, and Propriety of the Language, if he hath not Life and Fire to give his Work ſome Force and Spirit, 'tis nothing but a meer Corps, and a lumpiſh unwieldly Maſs of Matter. But every true

Genius

Genius, who is a perfect Master of the Language he writeth in, will let no fitting Ornaments and Decorations be wanting. His Fancy floweth in the richest Vein, and giveth his Pieces such lively Colours, and so beautiful a Complexion, that You would almost say his own Blood and Spirits were transfused into the Work.

A perfect Mastery and Elegance of Style is to be learn'd from the Common Rules, but must be improved by reading the Orators and Poets, and the celebrated Masters in every Kind; this will give Your Lordship a right Taste, and a true Relish; and when You can distin-

diſtinguiſh the Beauties of every finiſhed Piece, You will write Yourſelf with equal Commendation.

I do not aſſert, my Lord, that every good Writer muſt have a Genius for Poetry, I know *Tully* is an undeniable Exception; but I will venture to affirm, That a Soul that is not moved with Poetry, and hath no Taſte that way, is too dull and lumpiſh ever to write with any Proſpect of being read. It is a fatal Miſtake, and ſimple Superſtition, to diſcourage Youth from Poetry, and endeavour to prejudice them againſt it; if they are of a Poetical Genius, there is no reſtraining

reſtraining them: *Ovid*, Your Lordſhip knoweth, was deaf to his Father's frequent Admonitions; But if they are not quite ſmitten, and bewitched with Love of Verſe, they ſhould be trained to it, to make them Maſters of every kind of Poetry, that by Learning to imitate the Originals, they may arrive at a right Conception, and a true Taſte of their Authors; and being able to write in Verſe upon Occaſion, I can aſſure Your Lordſhip is no Diſadvantage to Proſe, for without reliſhing the one, a Man muſt never pretend to any Taſte of the other.

Taſte,

Taſte, my Lord, is a Metaphor borrowed from the Palate, by which we approve or diſlike what we eat and drink from the Agreeableneſs or Diſagreeableneſs of the Reliſh in our Mouth. Nature directs us in the Common Uſe, and every body can tell Sweet from Bitter, what is Sharp, or Sour, or Vapid, or Nauſeous; but it requireth Senſes more refined and exerciſed, to diſcover every Taſte that is moſt perfect in its Kind; every Palate is not a Judge of that, and yet Drinking is more uſed than Reading; all that I pretend to know of the Matter, is, my Lord, that Wine ſhould be like a Style,

clear, deep, bright and ſtrong, ſincere and pure, ſound and dry, (as our Advertiſements do well expreſs it) which laſt is a commendable Term, that contains the Juice of the richeſt Spirits, and only keepeth out all Cold and Dampneſs.

It is common to commend a Man, my Lord, for an Ear to Muſic, and a Taſte of Painting, which are nothing but a juſt Diſcernment of what is excellent and moſt perfect in them: The firſt dependeth entirely on the Ear; a Man can never expect to be a Maſter, that hath not an Ear tuned and ſet to Muſic: And You can no more ſing an *Ode* without

without an Ear, than without a Genius You can write one. Painting, my Lord, we ſhould think, requireth ſome Underſtanding in the Art, and exact Knowledge of the beſt Maſters Manner to be a Judge of it; but this Faculty like the reſt is founded in Nature. Knowledge in the Art, and frequent Converſation with the beſt Originals will certainly perfect a Man's Judgment, but if there is not a natural Sagacity and Aptneſs, Experience will be of no great Service. A good Taſte is an Argument of a great Soul, as well as a lively Wit. It is the Infirmity of poor Spirits to be taken with every Appearance,

and dazled by every Thing that ſparkles; But to paſs by what the Generality of the World admires, and to be detained with nothing, but what is moſt perfect, and excellent in its Kind, ſpeaks a ſuperior Genius, and a true Diſcernment: A new Picture by ſome meaner Hand, where the Colours are freſh and lively will engage the Eye, but the Pleaſure goes off with looking, and what we ran to at firſt with Eagerneſs, we preſently leave with Indifference; but the old Pieces of *Raphael*, *Michael Angelo*, *Tintoret*, and *Titian*, tho' not ſo inviting at firſt, open to the Eye by Degrees; and the longer and oftner we look, we

ſtill diſcover new Beauties, and find new Pleaſure. I am not, my Lord, a Man of ſo much Severity in my Temper, as to allow Your Lordſhip to be pleaſed with nothing but what is in the laſt Perfection: For then, poſſibly, ſo many are the Infirmities of Writing, beyond other Arts, You never could be pleaſed. There is a wide Difference in being Nice to judge of every Degree of Perfection, and Rigid in refuſing whatever is deficient in any Point. This would only be a Squeamiſhneſs of Stomach, not any Commendation of a good Palate; a true Taſte judges of Defects as well as Perfections, and

the beſt Judges are always the Perſons of the greateſt Candor. They will find none but real Faults, and wherever they commend, the Praiſe is juſtly due.

I have intimated already, that a good Taſte is to be formed by reading the beſt Authors, and when Your Lordſhip ſhall be able to point out their Beauties, to diſcern the brighteſt Paſſages, the Strength and Elegance of their Language, You will always write Yourſelf, and read others by that Standard, and muſt therefore neceſſarily excel.

In *Rome*, my Lord, there were ſome popular Orators, who with a falſe Eloquence and violent Action carried away

the Applauſe of the People; and with us we have ſome popular Men, who are followed and admired for the Loudneſs of their Voice, and a falſe *Pathos* both in Utterance and Writing: I have been ſometimes in ſome Confuſion to hear ſuch Perſons commended by thoſe of ſuperior Senſe, who could diſtinguiſh, one would think, between empty, pompous, ſpecious Harangues, and thoſe Pieces in which all the Beauties of Writing are combined. A natural Taſte muſt therefore be improved; like fine Parts, and a great Genius, it muſt be aſſiſted by Art, or it will be eaſily vitiated and cor-

rupted: Falſe Eloquence paſſeth only where True is not underſtood, and no body will commend bad Writers, that is acquainted with Good.

Theſe, my Lord, are only ſome curſory Thoughts on a Subject that will not be reduced to Rules. To treat of a true Taſte in a formal Method, would be very Inſipid; It is beſt collected from the Beauties and Laws of Writing, and muſt riſe from every Man's own Apprehenſion and Notion of what he heareth and readeth.

It may be therefore of farther Uſe, and moſt Advantage to Your Lordſhip, as well as a Relief and Entertainment to refreſh

refreſh Your Spirits in the End of a tedious Diſcourſe, if I lay before You ſome of the correcteſt Writers of this Age and the laſt, in ſeveral Faculties upon different Subjects. Hiſtory, Poetry, and Divinity have been the diſtinguiſhing Parts of our Writings, and I will be bold to give this general Character of our Writers in them, that they only fall ſhort of the Graces and Beauties of the Ancients.

Divinity, my Lord, is the juſt Boaſt and Glory of *England*. I need not ſay, that our Writers have excelled in Soundneſs of Doctrine, Exactneſs of Method, and Clearneſs of Reaſoning, but they have excelled

alſo in the Simplicity and Elegance of their Style, in Brightneſs of Thought, and Beauty of Expreſſion.

The Famous *Tillotſon* is all over Natural and Eaſy in the moſt unconſtrained, and freeſt Elegancy of Thoughts and Words: His Courſe, both in his Reaſoning and his Style, like a gentle and an even Current, is clear and deep, and calm and ſtrong. His Language is ſo pure, no Water can be more; It floweth with ſo free, uninterrupted a Stream, that it never ſtoppeth the Reader, or itſelf. Every Word poſſeſſeth its proper Place; we meet no hard, unuſual, mean, or far-fetched

fetched Expreſſion: His Diction is not in the naked Terms of the Things he ſpeaks of, but rather metaphorical, yet ſo eaſily are his Metaphors tranſferred, that You would not ſay they intrude into anothers Place, but that they ſtep into their own.

The Biſhop of *Rocheſter* is the correcteſt Writer of the Age, and comes neareſt to the great *Originals* of *Greece* and *Rome*, by a ſtudious Imitation of the Ancients: His Plainneſs and Accuracy, his Sublime and Oratory are equally laboured: His *Life* of *Cowley*, and his excellent *Diſcourſe* to his *Clergy*, are admirable for the Modeſty and Plainneſs, and inimitable

Simplicity of their Dreſs. His Anſwer to *Sorbiere* is ſo handſome a Way of expoſing an empty, trifling, pretending Pedant, the Wit ſo lively, the Satyr ſo courtly, and ſo ſevere, and his Addreſs in maintaining the Honour of our Country ſo maſterly and accompliſhed, that he maketh his Adverſary a ridiculous Thing too Inconſiderable for our Anger, at once the Subject of our Diverſion and Contempt: His Letters to my Lord *Dorſet* are the beſt Patterns of Apology, and a true Epiſtolary Style on a publick Subject: His Sermons are truly fine, ſo very beautiful, and ſo extremely ſtudied in every bright

bright Thought, and delicate Expreſſion, and all the Charms of Language, that Religion looketh lovely like herſelf, as well as venerable in our Eyes.

I have been induced by the Pleaſure that remaineth on my Mind from Reading, to forget that I was mentioning him only as a Divine, but every Thing from his Pen is in ſuch Perfection, that 'tis of Advantage to Your Lordſhip, wherever I introduce him.

Dr. *Atterbury* writeth with the feweſt Faults, and greateſt Excellencies of any, who have ſtudied to mix Art and Nature in their Compoſitions: His Style

Style is beautiful and unforced, delicate and ſtrong: Your Lordſhip will diſcern in him the true Spirit of the Claſſic Authors, which joined to his own Vivacity of Thought, and Brightneſs of Fancy, and heightened by an inward Senſe of the Sacred Doctrine, every where informs and animates his Writings.

Your Lordſhip muſt not take the Value of the Writers from the Order I name them in. It is not my Office to fix their Precedency; Dr. *Moſs* is one of the beſt Preachers of the Age, and an admirable Inſtance of the Uſe that is to be made of Claſſics, without pretending

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to Critics and Commentators, by Maſtering the genuine Spirit, and native Beauty of his Authors. He maketh them ſubſervient to Religion, and conſecrateth them to the Service of GOD.

In Dr. *Smalridge* are reconciled all the Beauties of Language to the Severity of Arguments: His Method and Reaſoning are abſolute upon the Points he treats of; His Style is clear and elegant, juſt and manly; He ennobleth his Claſſic Learning, and raiſes his Eloquence by the Majeſty and Beauty of the Scripture-Language.

Friendſhip, my Lord, if the World did not agree with me, might

might render me ſuſpected of Partiality, when I mention Dr. *Snape*, who ſhineth in all the Ornaments of Style, in a numerous, lively, forcible Expreſſion, and is happy above others in the Beauty, Significancy, and Propriety of his Epithets: 'Tis a noble Pleaſure to ſee Knowledge cloathed in ſuch beauteous Robes, and every divine Subject he undertaketh to adorn, dreſſed in ſo rich Attire.

Dr. *Stanhope* is Excellent in the Whole: His Thoughts and Reaſoning bright and ſolid: His Style is juſt, both for Purity of Language, Strength, and Beauty of Expreſſion, but the Periods are formed in ſo peculiar

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an Order of the Words, that I believe no body can pronounce them with the ſame Grace and Advantage as himſelf.

Dr. *Adams* writeth in an abundant, free, and flouriſhing Style, equally rich in Thought, and happy in Expreſſion.

The Biſhop of *Cheſter* is a perfect Orator in his Elocution, and thoſe ſacred Strains, which carry their own Reaſon and Conviction with them, are irreſiſtible in the Charms and Power of his Delivery.

Biſhop *Fleetwood*'s Softneſs, and Biſhop *Blackall*'s Plainneſs are their Characters.

I may juſtly add the Arch-Biſhop of *York*, who is truly Excellent

Excellent in all the Perfections of good Writing. Goodneſs, Fervour, Strength, and a true Spirit of Piety run thro' his various Compoſitions in a plain, unaffected Majeſty of Style.

With the Biſhop of *Exeter* and the good Arch-Biſhop, I muſt join the late learned and venerable Biſhop of S. *Aſaph*, Dr. *Beveridge*; who hath delivered himſelf with thoſe Ornaments alone, which his Subject ſuggeſted to him, and hath written in that Plainneſs and Solemnity of Style, that Gravity and Simplicity, which give Authority to the Sacred Truths he delivereth, and unanſwera-

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ble Evidence to the Doctrines he defendeth. There is ſomething ſo Great, Primitive, and Apoſtolical in his Writings, that it creates an Awe and Veneration in our Mind: The Importance of his Subjects are above the Decorations of Words, and what is Great and Majeſtic in itſelf, looketh moſt like itſelf, the leſs it is adorned. The true Sublime in the great Articles of our Faith is lodged in the plaineſt Words. The Divine Revelations are beſt expreſſed in the Language they were revealed in, and as I obſerved before of the Scriptures, they will ſuffer no Ornament or Amendment.

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But then, Your Lordship will observe, that the Practice of Virtue, and all moral Duties admit of all the Powers of humane Wit and Eloquence; where we are to persuade, as well as teach, where we are to engage the Will, as well as inform the Understanding; 'tis our Business to try all the Beauties and Charms of Words, and with all the Force of Oratory to prevail with Men to practise what they own to be their Duty. For Conviction of the Truth, we find Experience is not enough, unless the Will and Affections be won over to its Side.

I have troubled Your Lordſhip with theſe great Men, not that I think You will ever write Sermons, but that You may judge of the Writers; and as far as their Style may be proper on other Subjects, they are able to give You a true Taſte, and a right Turn of ſolid, and fine Writing.

Your Lordſhip, however, may on many Occaſions write as a Chriſtian, tho' not as a Divine; and whether Your Pen ſhall delight in Poetry or Proſe, the Subjects You may chooſe, and the Thoughts which are natural to every Sacred Theme, are ſo far exalted above the Heathen Poetry or Philoſophy, that

that the meaneſt Chriſtian, however he may fail in Diction, is able to ſurpaſs the nobleſt Wits of Antiquity in the Truth, and Greatneſs of his Sentiments.

Let me only propoſe a *Chriſtian Orator*, and compare him with the Orators of *Greece* and *Rome*, to ſhew Your Lordſhip the Advantages we are poſſeſſed of, and how greatly we may excell. If Your Lordſhip reads the Topics of *Ariſtotle* and *Tully*, and will obſerve how all their Arguments are formed upon the Circumſtances of Things, and drawn and enforced from Virtues and Vices, the Paſſions and Inclinations of Mankind,

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You will ſee the whole Compaſs their Thoughts could be extended to, and obſerve, that they have neglected no Advantage to raiſe, and beautify, and enforce their Arguments. But what a poor, barren Field is this, compared with the glorious Harveſt every Chriſtian gathers in the Scriptures? The Treaſures of Revelation are Immenſe: Every Article of Faith: All that GOD hath done for us, and declared unto us are ſo many Arguments of Perſuaſion; they are the only Principles of a Chriſtian's Practice, and the Reaſon of his Duty: All the Paſſions and Affections of our Souls are

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moved by the most powerful Application. A Christian's Topics are the Attributes of GOD, the Manifestations of His infinite Love to Mankind, Our Creation, our Fall, our Redemption in the wonderful Method the Scriptures declare it in: The Rewards proposed, the Punishments denounced: Heaven and Hell, Happiness and Misery eternal: The Resurrection of our Bodies: The Righteousness and Awfulness of the last Judgment: The Majesty of the Judge: The Solemnity of the Proceedings: The Comfort and the Terrors of His final Sentence: Fear and Love, Desire of Happiness,

Dread

Dread of Misery, Gratitude to move more generous Minds, Interest to prevail with lower Spirits, all enforced from eternal, infinite Considerations, are the inexhaustible Stores of a Christian Orator. And now, my Lord, with me the Wonder is, that our Divines do not exceed the greatest Orators of *Greece* and *Rome*, as far as our Topics of Argument and Persuasion are nobler, and infinitely more forcible than theirs: To argue for Virtue by displaying her Beauties, and showing the Reasonableness and Convenience of the Practice, with no other Encouragement than the secret Satisfaction of having done

worthily and well, (so for want of other, making Virtue her own Reward) was all the Heathens could advance with any Certainty in the Cause; whereas, the Christian is supplied with all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, which God hath abundantly poured forth upon the World.

The only Account, my Lord, that I can give, why *Tully* for Example could talk so well in the Cause of Virtue under all the Disadvantage of Arguments, and why we under a clearer Light, and furnished with a richer Vein of Eloquence, do yet in Arguments of a moral Nature fall below him, is this, that

that ſince we do not write by Inſpiration, we may fail in the Faculty and Power of Writing ſo much, that the Advantages of our Subject cannot ſet us upon the Level: 'Tis for this Reaſon I recommend Claſſic Learning, and a juſt Style in Divinity. We ſee the Effects in thoſe, that are Maſters of them: And ſhould an Orator ever riſe of *Demoſthenes*'s Spirit, and *Tully*'s Genius, and apply himſelf as an Orator to Divinity, work and labour his Subject by all the great Topics of Reaſoning and Perſuaſion, what wonderful Productions ſhould we behold? And if the pathetic, perſuaſive Way of Writing

were more practiſed and enforced, I believe it would produce wonderful Effects among thoſe who are not wanting in the Knowledge of their Duty, nor yet in the Conviction of its Truth, but are backward in their Practice of it, and forward to tranſgreſs it.

I cannot leave this Argument without one Obſervation more, that if we will write of Morality only upon the Heathen Plan, and enforce it only from their Topics, we ſhall find all our Eſſays too weak, and demonſtrate to the World, that a meer moral Chriſtian is as much below a Pagan, as a Divine or Believing Chriſtian is above him.

I am under an Engagement to Your Lordſhip to ſay ſomething of Hiſtory towards forming Your Style; I intended indeed to have ſpoken of it at large, but ſince it is enough for me at preſent to mention only our moſt celebrated Hiſtorians, I will deferr what I deſigned to ſay of the Laws of Hiſtory, and the Rules to be obſerved in Reading it, till Your Lordſhip ſhall give me Permiſſion to trouble You farther in this way.

All that ſeemeth neceſſary to the Buſineſs now before us, is to give Your Lordſhip ſome Obſervations upon the hiſtorical Style, becauſe, of all others,

I take it to be the moſt difficult to attain in Perfection: In all other Subjects there is a greater Latitude and Compaſs for the Writer's Thoughts, a larger Field of Fancy and Imagination before him, but in Hiſtory he is confined to the Facts and Occurrences he relateth. And theſe, as they are not alike Entertaining, and Ornamental in themſelves, require great Force and Judgment in the Narration to make them all agreeable. The worſt Province an Hiſtorian can fall upon, is a Series of barren Times, in which nothing remarkable happeneth, to awake our Attention, or engage our Notice. Here

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the Writer is becalmed, and goes on a dull, ſmooth, ſleepy Pace, unleſs he hath Spirit of his own to breathe into his Subject, and make it move with Life, as well as Truth, which muſt never be forſaken: The richeſt Fields of Hiſtory are Scenes of Action and Commotion, where Nations are agitated by Wars abroad, or Factions at Home; The moſt delicate Part of an Hiſtorian, which requireth the deepeſt Penetration, and ſoundeſt Judgment, are the Councils of States and Princes; the Springs of Action, the Principal Wheels, and Cardinal Hinges: The Characters of Men, the Jun-

cture of Times, the Intereſt of Parties, their different Views, and the ſeveral Schemes they purſue; I do not intend to ſay what Talents are required in an Hiſtorian, it will run me off too much from the Style I am to ſpeak of, if I ſhould enlarge upon them.

Every body knoweth the general Deſign of Hiſtory, and among thoſe who are in all Points qualified to undertake it, they will excell, who have the brighteſt Genius, and the moſt lively Wit. Perhaps, Your Lordſhip will wonder, I am ſure many People will condemn me for this Aſſertion, but I cannot help it, my Lord, for

for I have always thought that the more we are bound up to an exact Narration, we want more Life, and Fire to animate and inform the Story, otherwiſe the Succeſs of an Hiſtorian would depend on the Times he writeth of, more than on his Abilities. This moſt auſpicious Reign of our moſt Gracious QUEEN, hath opened the brighteſt, and moſt glorious Scene that Hiſtory can diſplay. The Triumphs of Her Arms, and the Happineſs of Her Councils, illuſtrate and adorn each other in a perfect Harmony and Co-operation. Theſe Annals will ſhine in any Hand, the Subject is ſo Great

and Glorious, it carrieth with it its own Light and Ornament; but nevertheleſs, that Genius, which can beautify and enliven the ſtiller Times of Peace, will celebrate the Triumphs of uninterrupted Conqueſt in a Style moſt equal to the Fortune, and Glory of our Arms.

Hiſtory, my Lord, will not admit thoſe Decorations other Subjects are capable of; the Paſſions and Affections are not to be moved with any Thing, but the Truth of the Narration. All the Force and Beauty muſt lie in the Order and Expreſſion. To relate every Event with Clearneſs and Perſpicuity, in ſuch Words as beſt expreſs

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the Nature of the Subject, is the chief Commendation of an Hiſtorian's Style. Hiſtory giveth us a Draught of Facts and Tranſactions in the World. The Colours theſe are painted in, the Strength and Significancy of the ſeveral Faces: the regular Confuſion of a Battel: the Diſtractions of a Tumult ſenſibly depicted: every Object, and every Occurrence ſo preſented to Your View, that while You read, You ſeem indeed to ſee them; this is the Art and Perfection of an hiſtorical Style. And Your Lordſhip will obſerve, that thoſe who have excelled in Hiſtory, have excelled in this eſpecially, and what

hath made them the Standards of that Style is the Clearneſs, the Life and Vigor of their Expreſſion, every where properly varied, according to the Variety of the Subjects they wrote on: For Hiſtory and Narration are nothing but juſt and lively Deſcriptions of the remarkable Events and Accidents in the World.

For this Reaſon we praiſe *Herodotus* and *Thucydides* among the *Greeks*, for I will mention no more of them, and upon this Account we commend *Saluſt* and *Livy* among the *Romans*. For tho' they all differ in their Style, yet they all agree in theſe common Excellencies.

Herodotus

Herodotus diſplays a natural Oratory in the Beauty and Clearneſs of a numerous and ſolemn Diction; he floweth with a ſedate and majeſtic Pace, with an eaſy Current, and a pleaſant Stream. *Thucydides* doth ſometimes write in a Style ſo cloſe, that almoſt every Word is a Sentence, and every Sentence almoſt acquaints us with ſomething New, ſo that from the Multitude of Clauſes, and Variety of Matter crowded together, we ſhould ſuſpect him to be obſcure; but yet ſo happy, ſo admirable a Maſter is he in the Art of Expreſſion, ſo proper, and ſo full, that we cannot ſay whether his Diction doth

doth more illuſtrate the Things he ſpeaks of, or whether his Words themſelves are not illuſtrated by his Matter. So mutual a Light do his Expreſſion and Subject reflect on each other. His Diction, tho' it be preſſed and cloſe, is nevertheleſs great and magnificent, equal to the Dignity and Importance of his Subject. He firſt, after *Herodotus*, ventured to adorn the Hiſtorians Style, to make the Narration more pleaſing, by leaving the Flatneſs and Nakedneſs of former Ages: This is moſt obſervable in his Battles, where he does not only relate the meer Fight, but writeth with a martial Spirit,

Spirit, as if he ſtood in the hotteſt of the Engagement; and what is moſt excellent, as well as remarkable in ſo cloſe a Style, is, that it is numerous and harmonious, that his Words are not laboured nor forced, but fall into their Places in a natural Order, as into their moſt proper Situation.

Saluſt and *Livy* Your Lordſhip will read, I hope with ſo much Pleaſure, as to make a thorough and intimate Acquaintance with them. I have ſaid a great many Pages back, that *Thucydides* and *Saluſt* are generally compared, as *Livy* is with *Herodotus*; and ſince I am fallen upon their Characters,

cters, I cannot help touching the Compariſons. *Saluſt* is repreſented as a conciſe, a ſtrong and nervous Writer, and ſo far he agreeth with *Thucydides*'s Manner, but he is alſo charged with being obſcure, as conciſe Writers very often are, without any Reaſon. For, if I may judge by my own Apprehenſions, as I read him, no Writer can be more clear, more obvious and intelligible. He hath not indeed, as far as I can obſerve, one redundant Expreſſion; but his Words are all weighed and choſen, ſo expreſſive and ſignificant, that I will challenge any Critic to take a Sentence of his, and expreſs it clearer

clearer or better; his Contraction ſeemeth wrought and laboured. To me he appears as a Man, that conſidered and ſtudied Perſpicuity and Brevity to that Degree, that he would not retrench a Word, which might help him to expreſs his Meaning, nor ſuffer one to ſtand, if his Senſe was clear without it. Being more diffuſed, would have weakened his Language, and have made it obſcurer rather, than clearer. For Multitude of Words only ſerve to cloud, or diſſipate the Senſe; and tho' a copious Style in a Maſter's Hand is clear and beautiful, yet where Conciſeneſs and Perſpicuity are once recon-

reconciled, any Attempt to enlarge the Expreſſions, if it doth not darken, does certainly make the Light much feebler. *Saluſt* is all Life and Spirit, yet grave and majeſtic in his Diction: His Uſe of old Words is perfectly Right; there is no Affectation, but more Weight and Significancy in them; the Boldneſs of his Metaphors are among his greateſt Beauties, they are choſen with great Judgment, and ſhow the Force of his Genius: The Colouring is ſtrong, and the Strokes are bold, and in my Opinion he choſe them for the ſake of that Brevity he loved, to expreſs more clearly and more forcibly,

bly, what otherwiſe he muſt have written in looſer Characters with leſs Strength and Beauty. And no Fault can be objected to the juſteſt and exacteſt of the *Roman* Writers.

Livy, my Lord, is the moſt Conſiderable of the *Roman* Hiſtorians, if to the Perfection of his Style we join the Compaſs of his Subject. In which he hath the Advantage over all that wrote before him, eſpecially *Thucydides*, whoſe Hiſtory, however drawn out into Length, is confined to the ſhorteſt Period of any, except what remaineth of *Saluſt*. No Hiſtorian could be happier in the

the Greatneſs and Dignity of his Subject, and none was better qualified to adorn it; for his Genius was equal to the Majeſty of the *Roman* Empire, and every Way capable of the mighty Undertaking; he is not ſo copious in Words, as abundant in Matter, rich in his Expreſſion, grave, majeſtic, and lively, and if I may have Liberty to enlarge on the old Commendation, I would ſay his Style floweth with Milk and Honey, in ſuch Abundance, ſuch Pleaſure and Sweetneſs, that when once Your Lordſhip is Proficient enough to read him readily, You will go on with unwearied Delight, and never

never lay him out of Your Hands without Impatience to reſume him. We may reſemble him to *Herodotus*, in the Manner of his Diction; but he is more like *Thucydides*, in the Grandeur and Majeſty of Expreſſion; and if we obſerve the Multitude of Clauſes in the Length of his Periods, perhaps *Thucydides* himſelf is not more crowded; only the Length of the Periods is apt to deceive us; and great Men among the Ancients, as well as Moderns, have been induced to think this Writer was copious, becauſe his Sentences were long. Copious he is indeed, and forcible in his Deſcriptions; not laviſh in the Number,

Number, but exuberant in the Richneſs and Significancy of his Words. Your Lordſhip will obſerve, for I ſpeak upon my own Obſervation, that *Livy* is not ſo eaſy and obvious to be underſtood as *Saluſt*; the Experiment is made every where in reading five or ſix Pages of each Author together. The Shortneſs of *Saluſt*'s Sentences, as long as they are clear, ſhows his Senſe and Meaning all the Way in an Inſtant: The Progreſs is quick and plain, and every three Lines gives us a new and compleat Idea; we are carried from one Thing to another with ſo ſwift a Pace, that we run as we read, and yet

yet cannot, if we read diſtinctly, run faſter than we underſtand him. This, I think, is the brighteſt Teſtimony that can be given of a clear and obvious Style. In *Livy*, my Lord, we cannot paſs on ſo readily; we are forced to wait for his Meaning till we come to the End of the Sentence, and have ſo many Clauſes to ſort, and refer to their proper Places in the Way, that I muſt own I cannot read him ſo readily at Sight, as I can *Saluſt*; though with Attention and Conſideration I underſtand him as well. He is not ſo eaſy, nor ſo well adapted to young Proficients, as the other; and is ever plain-

eſt,

eſt, when his Sentences are ſhorteſt; which I think is a Demonſtration. Some, perhaps, will be apt to conclude, that in this I differ from *Quintilian*, but I do not conceive ſo myſelf. For *Quintilian* recommends *Livy* before *Saluſt*, rather for his Candor, and the larger Compaſs of his Hiſtory; for he owneth a good Proficiency is required to underſtand him; and I can only referr to the Experience of young Proficients which of them is more Open to their Apprehenſion. Diſtinction of Sentences, in few Words, provided the Words be plain and expreſſive, ever giveth Light to the Au-

thor,

thor, and carries his Meaning uppermoſt; but long Periods, and a Multiplicity of Clauſes, however they abound with the moſt obvious and ſignificant Words, do neceſſarily make the Meaning more retired, leſs forward and obvious to the View: And in this, my Lord, *Livy* may ſeem as crowded as *Thucydides*, if not in the Number of Periods, certainly in the Multitude of Clauſes, which ſo diſpoſed, do rather obſcure, than illuminate his Writings. But in ſo rich, ſo majeſtic, ſo flowing a Writer, we may wait with Patience to the End of the Sentence, for the Pleaſure ſtill increaſeth as we read. The

Elegance and Purity, the Greatneſs and Nobleneſs of his Diction, his Happineſs in Narration, and his wonderful Eloquence, are above all Commendation; and his Style, if we were to decide, is certainly the Standard of *Roman* Hiſtory. For *Saluſt*, I muſt own, is too impetuous in his Courſe; he hurries his Reader on too faſt, and hardly ever alloweth him the Pleaſure of Expectation, which in reading Hiſtory, where it is juſtly raiſed upon important Events, is the greateſt of all others.

Your Lordſhip will obſerve, by reading ſome ordinary Hiſtorians, and comparing them with

with theſe, that Hiſtory is the moſt difficult Province of all others; and if there were not ſomething in Novelty grateful to the Curioſity of Mankind, ſomething in the Hiſtories of our own Times and Nation, that engages us as Parties, and gives us an Intereſt in the Events, Nothing would be read, but what was ſo beautifully expreſſed, as by the Charms of Language, and Force of a lively Repreſentation, to attract our Eyes. Every great Hiſtorian would make a greater Orator, and perhaps, the greateſt Orator, even *Tully* himſelf, would fall below the Hiſtorian, ſhould he attempt to ri-

val him. For the Orator hath the Advantage of all Arts and Topics of Perſuaſion, but the Hiſtorian can only uſe the Abilities of an Orator to expreſs and relate, and according to Truth, adorn the Subject of his Hiſtory.

Having thus prepared Your Lordſhip for Reading them, ſo as to form ſome Judgment of their Style, from theſe ancient Standards I deſcend at laſt to our own Hiſtorians, who are no leſs various, than excellent in their Style and Method, and do not come altogether ſhort of the *Greek* and *Roman* Writers, but emulate both the Height and Spirit of the *Claſſic* Diction:

The

The great Disadvantage our most celebrated Historians seem to labour under, is too long, and too tedious an Interruption, by the Insertion of Laws and Statutes, and Records in the Body of their Narration; at least, in making too particular and copious a Recital of them, whereas they had better be mentioned only in general, and thrown aside by themselves, as they commonly are, into an Appendix.

I will pass over the Historians of elder Date, as *Daniel*, Lord *Verulam*, Lord *Herbert*, and others, as too remote from the present Standard; my Lord *Herbert* comes the nearest; but

what is a Wonder to me, Sir *Francis Bacon*, who hath given us many Strokes of a maſterly Pen, and was certainly the greateſt and moſt univerſal Genius the World, perhaps, hath produced, hath failed moſt in his Style, where we ſhould expect he would have moſt excelled. For in Philoſophy, Perſpicuity and a plain Elegance are only required, but in Hiſtory all the Beauty, Strength, Majeſty, and Compaſs of Expreſſion are demanded. In theſe his *Henry* VII. is extremely wanting, and if we examine into it, we ſhall find, that nothing but the Reputation of the Author ſupporteth

porteth the Reputation of the Hiſtory.

Sir *Walter Raleigh*'s Hiſtory of the World is a Work of ſo vaſt a Compaſs, ſuch endleſs Variety, that no Genius, but one Adventurous as his own, durſt have undertaken that great Deſign. I do not apprehend any great Difficulty in Collecting, and Common-placing an univerſal Hiſtory from the whole Body of Hiſtorians; that is nothing but mechanic Labour. But to digeſt the ſeveral Authors in his Mind, to take in all their Majeſty, Strength, and Beauty, to raiſe the Spirit of meaner Hiſtorians, and to equal all the Excellencies of the beſt, is

Sir *Walter*'s peculiar Praiſe. His Style is the moſt perfect, the happieſt, and moſt beautiful of the Age he wrote in; majeſtic, clear, and manly, and he appears every where ſo ſuperior, rather than unequal to his Subject, that the Spirit of *Rome* and *Athens* ſeems to be breathed into his Work. In the ſacred Hiſtory alone, his Strength and his Spirit fail him; For nothing can preſerve that ſublime Simplicity, that awful Solemnity, and divine Majeſty of the inſpired Hiſtorians, but their own Words, as they are moſt plainly and properly rendred into any Language; this is an accidental Confirmation of a former Remark,

mark, and I muſt finiſh Sir *Walter*'s Character with declaring my Opinion, that his admirable Performance in ſuch a prodigious Undertaking, ſheweth, that if he had attempted the Hiſtory of his own Country, or his own Times, he would have excelled even *Livy* and *Thucydides*; and the Annals of Queen *Elizabeth* by his Pen, without diminiſhing from the ſerious, judicious *Cambden*, had been the brighteſt Glory of her Reign, and would have tranſmitted his Hiſtory as the Standard of our Language even to the preſent Age: For certainly the Writers in that glorious Reign, and the beginning

of the next, are far preferable in their Style to any, till you come to King *Charles* the Second. In the long Interval of half an Age, You will hardly meet with one beſides the *Royal Martyr*, whoſe Style is comparable to Sir *Philip Sydney*, *Bilſon*, *Hooker*, or *Raleigh*. So that we muſt deſcend almoſt from the Reformation, at leaſt to the Reſtoration, for a Standard.

The Biſhop of *Salisbury* writeth with perfect Maſtery in a Language not Native to him; and whatever his Principles may be, his Style I may venture to ſay, is entirely *Engliſh*; except, as was objected to *Livy*, it may

ſeem

ſeem ſometimes to bewray his Country.

The *Hiſtory* of the Royal Society ſhows how well Philoſophy becometh a Narration, and that the Progreſs of Knowledge is as entertaining, as that of Arms; Her Conqueſts more extended, and her Victories more glorious. The Diction is every where ſuited to the Subject: The whole Work ſpeaketh the Author in a ſtudied Eaſineſs, and correct Accuracy of Expreſſion, and a Style as much improved, as the Philoſophy he treateth of.

I dare not attempt my Lord *Clarendon*'s Commendation: To give his juſt Character, requireth

a Happineſs of Expreſſion, a Clearneſs of Judgment, and Majeſty of Style, equal to his own: Or to ſay all in a Word, that peculiar Felicity in deſigning Characters, in which he hath ſucceeded beyond Example. Your Lordſhip will want no Sollicitations to read the nobleſt, and moſt impartial Hiſtorian this Nation hath produced. The Compaſſion and Reſentments of his Thoughts, the noble Openneſs and Freedom of his Reflexions, the glorious Debt he pays to Friendſhip, and the Veil he kindly draweth over the Sorrows and Reproach of his Country, are ſo admirably expreſſed in ſuch

lively

lively Colours, that we are ſtruck with Sympathy, and do feel by Reading, that he wrote from his Heart under the deepeſt Senſe, and the moſt preſent Impreſſion of the Evils he bewaileth. I have met with none that may compare with him in the Weight and Solemnity of his Style, in the Strength and Clearneſs of Diction, in the Beauty and Majeſty of Expreſſion, and that noble Negligence of Phraſe, which maketh his Words wait every where upon his Subject, with a Readineſs and Propriety, that Art and Study are almoſt Strangers to.

Reading

Reading these celebrated Authors will give Your Lordship a true Taste of good Writing, and form You to a just and correct Style upon every Occasion that shall demand Your Pen. I would not recommend any of them to a strict Imitation: That is servile and mean, and You cannot propose an exact Copy of a Pattern without falling short of the Original; but if Your Lordship once readeth them with a true Relish and Discernment of their Beauties, You may lay them aside, and be secure of Writing with all the Graces of them all, without owing Your Perfection to any. Your Style

and

and Manner will be Your own, and even Your Letters upon the most ordinary Subjects will have a native Beauty and Elegance in the Compoſition, which will equal them with the beſt Originals, and ſet them far above the common Standard.

Upon this Occaſion, my Lord, I cannot paſs by Your Favourite Author, the grave and facetious 'Squire *Bickerſtaff*, who hath drawn Mankind in every Dreſs, and every Diſguiſe of Nature, in a Style ever varying with the Humours, Fancies, and Follies, he deſcribes. He hath ſhowed himſelf a Maſter in every Turn of his Pen, whether his Subject be

be light, or ſerious, and hath laid down the Rules of common Life with ſo much Judgment, in ſuch agreeable, ſuch lively, and elegant Language, that from him Your Lordſhip at once may form Your Manners and Your Style.

Perhaps I ſhall be blamed, if I recommend any Modern Comedies to Your Reading. They are, indeed, moſt of them, ſo very prophane and obſcene, that I had much rather caution Your Lordſhip moſt earneſtly againſt them, than give them the leaſt Countenance in judging, they may be read with Safety. But if the moſt Innocent were choſen,

and

and the moſt Innocent are the beſt, I muſt needs ſay ſo much in their behalf, that I know no Writers, who are better able to give You a true Notion of familiar Wit and Writing, than the beſt and moſt correct of our Comic Authors.

And now, my Lord, You ſee I am entered upon Poetry, where little need be ſaid after what I have ſaid already. Perhaps I may touch ſome Characters again, but beſides thoſe I have named, I may recommend Mr. *Addiſon*, and Mr. *Prior*, as perfect Patterns of true poetic Writing. Mr. *Addiſon* is more laboured, like his great Maſter *Virgil*, he hath weighed every

Word,

Word, nor is there an Expreſſion in all his Lines, that can be changed for any juſter, or more forcible than itſelf. Mr. *Prior* enjoys the freeſt and eaſieſt Muſe in the World, and perhaps is the only Man, who may rival *Horace* in an admirable Felicity of Expreſſion, both in the ſublime and familiar Way. Like our celebrated *Cowley*, he hath excelled in all Kinds of Poetry: In his Works we meet an Aſſembly of the Muſes; ſince the *Roman Swan* expired, none hath taken bolder and happier Flights, or touched the Lyre with a more maſterly Hand; and ſince *Chaucer*'s Days none hath told a merry or heroic

roic Tale ſo well. In the beſt Collection of the Miſcellanies, Your Lordſhip will read with Pleaſure the moſt perfect Pieces of Compoſition the greateſt Maſters have produced, and without entring into the Characters of any, it will be enough to ſay, they are all admirable.

To theſe I may add ſome of more ancient Date, and tho' their Style is out of the Standard now, there are in them ſtill ſome Lines ſo extremely beautiful, that our Modern Language cannot reach them. *Chaucer* is too old, I fear, for ſo young Company as Your Lordſhip; but *Spencer*, tho' he be antiquated too, hath ſtill

Charms

Charms remaining to make Your Lordſhip enamoured of him. His antique Verſe hath Muſic in it to raviſh any Ears, that can be ſenſible of the ſofteſt, ſweeteſt Numbers, that ever flowed from a Poet's Pen.

Shakeſpear is a wonderful Genius, a ſingle Inſtance of the Force of Nature, and the Strength of Wit. Nothing can be greater, and more lively, than his Thoughts; nothing nobler, and more forcible, than his Expreſſion. The Fire of his Fancy breaketh out into his Words, and ſets his Reader on a Flame: He maketh the Blood run cold or warm, and is ſo admirable a Maſter of the Paſſions, that

that he raiſes Your Courage, Your Pity, and Your Fear, at his Pleaſure, but he delighteth moſt in Terror.

Milton, my Lord, is the Aſſertor of Poetic Liberty, and would have freed us from the Bondage of Rhime, but like Sinners, and like Lovers, we hug our Chain, and are pleaſed in being Slaves. Some indeed have made ſome faint Attempts to break it, but their Verſe had all the Softneſs and Effeminacy of Rhime without the Muſic: And *Dryden* himſelf, who ſometimes ſtruggled to get looſe, always relapſed, and was faſter bound than ever; but Rhime was his Province, and he could make

make the Tinkling of his Chains harmonious. Mr. *Philips* hath trod the neareſt in his great Maſter's Steps, and hath equalled him in his Verſe more than he falleth below him in the Compaſs and Dignity of his Subject. The *Shilling* is truly *Splendid* in his Lines, and his Poems will live longer than the unfiniſhed Caſtle, as long as *Blenheim* is remembred, or *Cyder* drunk in *England*. But I have digreſſed from *Milton*, and that I may return, and ſay all in a Word. His Style, his Thoughts, his Verſe are as ſuperior to the generality of other Poets, as his Subject. His Diſloyalty alone throws a Cloud upon his Glory,

and

and we ſtand amazed to think that Man could ever be a Rebel, who had ſeen, as it were, and deſcribed, in all the Pomp of Terror, the Rebellion and Puniſhment of the Apoſtate Angels.

Cowley. I need not inſiſt on, when his Character is ſo admirably drawn by ſo great a Maſter, as I have named already.

Waller. for the Muſic of his Numbers, the Courtlineſs of his Verſe, the Eaſineſs and Happineſs of his Thoughts on a thouſand Subjects, deſerves Your Lordſhip's Conſideration more, perhaps, than any other, becauſe his Manner and his Subjects are more common to Perſons

ſons of Quality, and the Affairs of a Court. Mr. *Granville*, my Lord, hath rivall'd him in his fineſt Addreſs, and is as happy, as he ever was, in raiſing modern Compliments upon ancient Story, and ſetting off the *Britiſh* Valour and the *Engliſh* Beauty, with the old Gods and Goddeſſes.

Sir *John Denham* is famed for his *Cooper's-Hill*, and *Windſor* is more honoured in being the Subject of his Proſpect, than the *Hill* is in being the Subject of his Poem. For *Windſor* is only the Ornament of his *Hill*, but his Poem is the Ornament of *Windſor*.

Several

Several other of our Poets deſerve to be remembred, and they ſhould not be omitted, if I thought theſe Sheets a Record. I have already mentioned Mr. *Dryden* on the wrong Side of a Compariſon, and it would be Injuſtice to paſs him by, when I may mention him on the Right. For, certainly, there never roſe a happier Genius, and a more abſolute Maſter of Language, and Numbers. All his Poems were extremely ſtudied, and he made every Thing he borrowed ſo much his own, that he improved the brighteſt Paſſages of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and repaid them with abundant Intereſt.

Otway writes with ſo fine a Spirit, with ſo perfect a Com-

mand of our Paſſions, his Language is ſo very beautiful, and all his tender Strains ſo very moving in the moſt ſenſible Words, that, perhaps, Your Lordſhip will no where meet the Paſſions touched with a more maſterly Hand, or expreſſed in more lively Colours.

I have made no diſtinct mention of Tragedy, and the moſt celebrated of our Writers, that have raiſed the *Engliſh* Stage, as high as the *Athenian*; they have moſt excelled, when they formed their Plays on the *Grecian* Plan, or built them, at leaſt, after the ancient Models. And where the Unities are preſerved by a great Genius, and a maſterly Hand, I think the Structure

ſture of our Tragedies more beautiful than the ancient Buildings. Your Lordſhip, I hope, will never act a Part, where that Language is required; and I have omitted to ſpeak of the Tragic Style, becauſe 'tis raiſed above the ordinary Sentiments and Expreſſion of Mankind. The Perſons of the Drama ſpeak, as they are dreſſed, in Buskins. The Mind is in too much Commotion, and agitated by thoſe Paſſions, that can be only raiſed upon ſuch a Criſis, as worketh up all the Actions of Life to the laſt and moſt important Event. Yet, my Lord, our Tragedies may be read with great Advantage to Style and Language, if we can bring them down to our

calmer Thoughts, and the ſtiller Scenes of Life, and only uſe them to be better acquainted with the Nature, Violence, Degrees, and Expreſſion of all the various Paſſions that exerciſe and diſtract the Mind of Man. Treatiſes are of no Uſe to inform us upon this great Subject, but when the Paſſions are practically diſplayed, all their Springs diſcovered, and the whole tumultuous Theory preſented in lively Actions on the Stage, we ſee and feel the Agitation of the Actors in ourſelves, we do really put on all their perſonated Paſſions, they ſtrike upon our Souls, and Nature anſwers from within. We have but few great Maſters in this noble Art. After *Shake-*

ſpear,

ſpear, whom I have named already, and *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, who have ſometimes touched the Paſſions with a maſterly Hand, we muſt come down to *Dryden* and *Otway*, who ſtand almoſt alone, unleſs *Lee* may be joined unto them, but he is too much out of the Way, too much in a Paſſion to be named, and therefore we will put *Southern* in his Room. Afterwards we have none of Conſideration, but *Congreve*, *Rowe*, and Mr. *Granville*, and two *Oxford* Scholars, who need not be pointed out.

I do not inſiſt on the particular Character of theſe Authors, thinking it enough to my Purpoſe to name them, as the moſt diſtinguiſhed of our Tragic Writers.

Suckling, and other *Bards* celebrated in their Time, I forbear; and *Ben Johnſon* I dare not meddlē with, leſt he, or ſome body ſurly as himſelf, ſhould riſe, and rebuke me for not writing of him with that Labour and Exactneſs he always wrote with.

My Lord, I have given You a Liſt of Poets almoſt equal to the *Ancients*, and this is the greateſt Character that can be given of *Modern* Works. For though I think *Spencer* and *Shakeſpear* as great Genius's as ever were produced in *Rome* or *Athens*, they will not bear a ſtrict Compariſon upon all the Beauties of Writing. *Milton*, alone, in *Epic* Writing hath tranſcended the *Greek* and the *Latin* Poet. He hath excelled

led the *First* in the Force and Richneſs of Imagination, and hath rivalled the *Laſt* in Juſtneſs of Thought, and Exactneſs of the Work. *Spencer* may, perhaps, diſpute the *Paſtoral*, even with *Theocritus*; for I dare prefer him to *Virgil*, and in him alone the Sweetneſs and Ruſticity of the *Doric* Muſe was to be found, till Mr. *Philips* of *Cambridge* roſe, who hath aſſembled all the Beauties of the *Arcadian* Poetry, and reſtored their Simplicity, Language and Manners to the Swains. Here then, my Lord, we ſtand. I may with great Modeſty and Juſtice own, that ſeveral Pieces of *Engliſh* Compoſure are nothing inferiour to the choiceſt Productions of Antiquity, but I cannot pro-

pronounce ſo, upon the Whole, upon their Writers and ours. I muſt beg Pardon therefore, if I fall into Sir *William Temple*'s Party in this Article of *Ancient* and *Modern* Learning, and give the Preference to the great Originals of *Greece* and *Rome*; I am the more confirmed in this Judgment, by obſerving that our greateſt Maſters in Compoſition have been always of the ſame Opinion; and it would be hard for the Patrons of *Modern* Learning, when they can ſhow nothing of their *Own*, that may compare with the *Ancients*, to argue for their Opinion from the Writings of thoſe, who diſclaim it.

But, my Lord, I muſt not enter into this Controverſy now,

and

and having given You theſe few Directions for the forming Your Style by reading the celebrated Writers of *Italy* and *England*, I ſhall take my Leave of this Subject, after I have juſt mentioned this one Particular, that perhaps the beſt Way to diſcern the Beauties of good Writing, is, to read ſome of the worſt. *Ogilby* and *Dryden* will ſhow You the difference, and when You perceive the inſufferable Dulneſs of the one, You will ſee more clearly the Brightneſs of the other. Light indeed will ſhow itſelf; but a Jewel looketh brighter in a Heap of Coals, than in the Luſtre of a Crown, and Beauty is more conſpicuous in the Neighbourhood of Deformity, than in the Circle of the Court.

I hope, Your Lordſhip will not think I have recommended any Thing to You below Your Quality: Your Fortunes place You far above the Neceſſity of Learning, but nothing can ſet You above the Ornament of it: And I am the more bold to preſs it upon Your Lordſhip, becauſe theſe Accompliſhments appear with greater Advantages, and do really ſit more handſomely on Perſons of Quality, than any other.

The late Duke of *Devonſhire* deſerves a Name in the foremoſt Liſt of our *Engliſh* Writers, but I reſerved him to the laſt, becauſe he was of Your Lordſhip's Alliance, and I thought his Name would better recommend what I have

have offered, than any Thing elſe I can ſay. He was not only the fineſt Gentleman of his Time, but one of the fineſt Scholars in every Part of polite Learning: Whatever Parts of his Character have been diſputed, this Palm hath been yielded with the greateſt Juſtice and Applauſe; and when Your Lordſhip thinks how great an Ornament he was to the *Engliſh* Court and Nation, You will find his Learning was as great an Ornament to him.

I am aſhamed to preſent theſe Thoughts in ſo ill an Hand, but Your Lordſhip will conſider that we Scholars are generally bad Pen-Men: We ſeldom regard the Mechanic Part of Writing, tho' nothing ſhould be put into

Your

Your Lordſhip's Hands, that looketh like ſo rude a Draught.

Such as it is, it is humbly offered to Your Lordſhip with my conſtant Prayers for Your Proſperity, and I hope Your Lordſhip will accept it, as a ſmall Teſtimony of the Honour I have for Your Illuſtrious Houſe, From,

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt humble, and

Belvoir, Dec. 29. 1710. *Moſt obedient Servant,*

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

HENRY FELTON.